DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 291 712 SP 029 948

AUTHOR Zeller, Paula Klevan; Jacobson, Michael F.
TITLE Eat, Think, and Be Healthy! Creative Nutrition Activities for Children.
INSTITUTION Center for Science in the Public Interest, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-89329-016-5
PUB DATE May 87
NOTE 151p.
AVAILABLE FROM Center for Science in the Public Interest, 1501 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036 ($9.25).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Eating Habits; *Health Activities; *Health Materials; Intermediate Grades; *Lesson Plans; *Nutrition Instruction; Physical Health

ABSTRACT

This book provides an activity-oriented guide to a nutrition instruction program. The 56 activities, described and illustrated, are suitable for children from the third to the sixth grade. For each activity, a description is presented as well as the purpose of the activity, materials and resources needed, and the procedures to follow. Reproducible student pages are included. School subjects that may be related to each activity are also suggested, and recipes are provided for about 30 activities. The appendix offers "Nutrition in a Nutshell" as well as indexes to the recipes and related subject notes. (JD)

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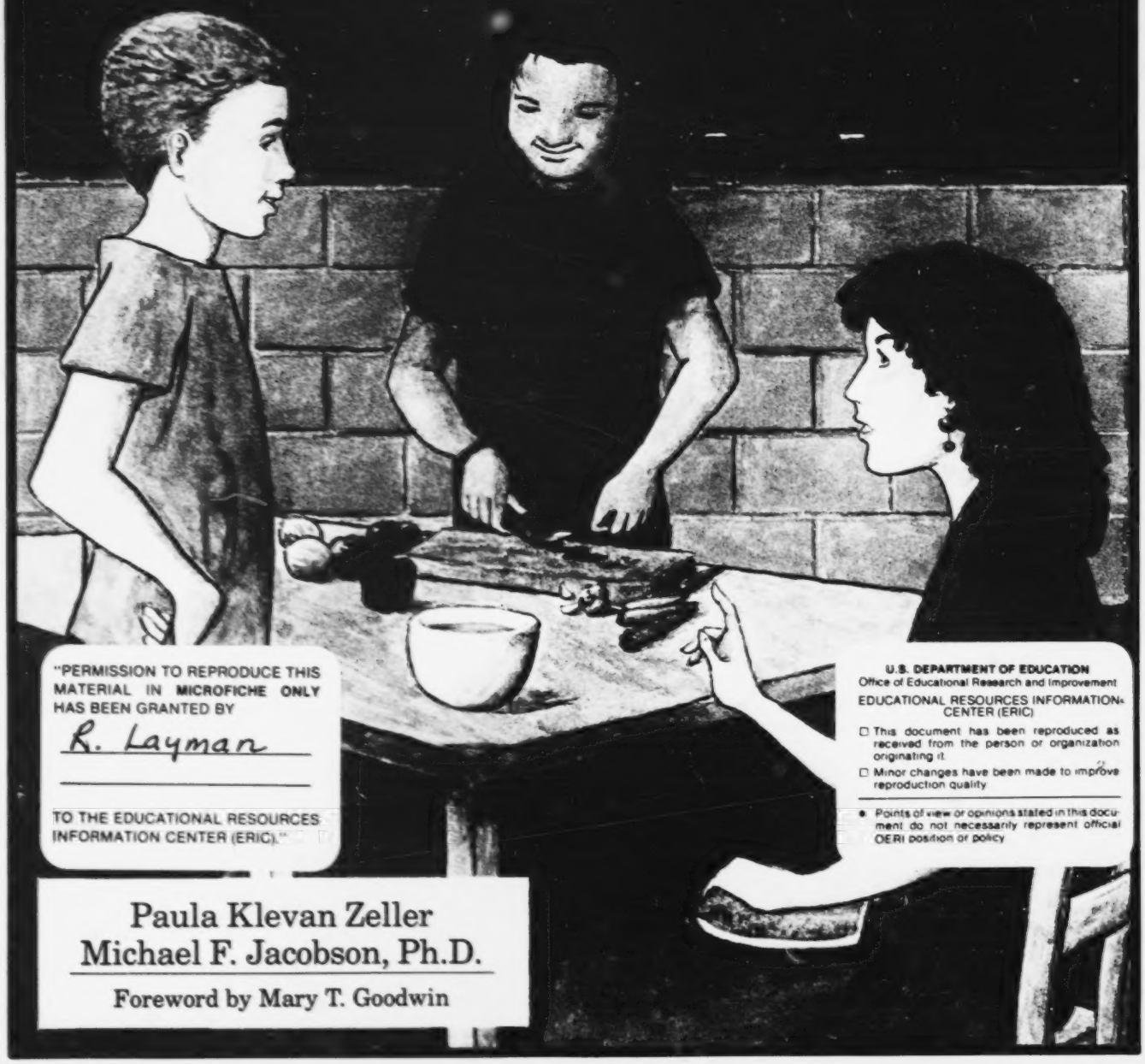

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Paula Klevan Zeller
Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D.

Foreword by Mary T. Goodwin

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EAT, THINK, AND BE HEALTHY!

Creative Nutrition Activities for Children

Paula Klevan Zeller
and
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Executive Director
Center for Science in the Public Interest

Center for Science in the Public Interest
Washington, D.C.

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Center for Science in the Public Interest
1501 16th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-332-9110

Design: Wordscape

Artwork: Caroline Mayer

ISBN: 0-89329-016-5

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1st Printing–May, 1987

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to Janet Savage, instructor, and Joan Gussow, associate professor, Department of Nutrition Education, Columbia University Teachers College; and Millie Solomon, Curriculum Specialist, Educational Development Center, for serving as conceptual and technical advisors.

We also thank Dorothy Rich, Director, Home and School Institute, for her wisdom and her contagious enthusiasm.

This book would not have been possible were it not for the expert suggestions and guidance from Jackie Meltzer, Norrine Mack, and Abigail Wiebenson, Georgetown Day School, Washington, D.C.; Jim and Elizabeth Webster, Omni Montessori Center, Charlotte, N.C.; Joanne Rae Zeller, New York City Board of Education; Wallace Watson, Corte Madera, Calif.; and former teacher Donna Gordon.

Thanks also to dental professionals Dr. Edward R. Mopsik and Dr. Lawrence Bier, Washington, D.C., for their technical expertise. We also appreciate the careful review by Bonnie F. Liebman, nutrition director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

We are grateful to the Glen Eagles Foundation (Washington, D.C.), Leslie Barclay, Ruth Test, and members of CSPI, whose financial assistance made publication of this book possible.

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FOREWORD

by Mary T. Goodwin
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Children today find themselves in a complex society that is undergoing breathtaking changes. The challenge for educators is to help children develop self-reliance in a world filled with difficulties, opportunities, and confusion. Because food is absolutely essential for survival, activities around food can contribute to a sense of security and stability.

Eat, Think, and Be Healthy! empowers children with the knowledge and skills to choose foods for health. Children learn that what they eat affects how they grow, feel, and behave. They are given experience in selecting, preparing, and savoring foods beneficial to their survival and health. Coping intelligently with their dietary needs increases children's self-esteem, and encourages further discovery. What better way to develop a sense of security than through food experiences that connect with personal health, family traditions, pleasurable events, and the nature of life?

Changes in our society have intensified the need for food skills to be taught as part of a child's basic education for survival. The vast majority of working mothers with school-age children, long commutes, and the upswing in one-parent households means that most children spend little time with their parents. Traditional food skills are not passed on automatically from parent to child.

Eat, Think, and Be Healthy! helps close this gap by teaching children some "basics." They learn how to create healthful snacks, quick breakfasts, scrumptious salads and sandwiches, and heart-warming (and heart-healthy) soups. Skills like these can provide a sense of self-reliance that stays with a child throughout life.

Many people have forgotten that the primary reason for eating is nourishment. In the not-too-distant past, food was treated with reverence because of its life-sustaining qualities. Enjoying a meal was a shared experience–in a sense it was sharing life with others. In some cultures, businesses closed down for several hours in the middle of the day so families could share and savor food together. In *Food to Nurture the Mind*, Dr. Bruno Bettelheim recognized the crucial psychological meaning of food. He asserts that "how one is being fed and how one eats has a larger impact on personality than any other human experience."

Eat, Think, and Be Healthy! introduces children to the delicious and sensual aspects of food. Chapters such as "Food, Glorious Food," immerse children in the poetry that makes food the enticing topic it is.

All too often in our society, though, instead of relishing the delights of Nature's bountiful and healthful fruits, children develop bizarre beliefs about food. Many kids as young as two are afraid of getting fat, perhaps because of what I call the "culture-bound obesity syndrome," which is strongly reinforced by advertising. Eating has become synonymous with "dieting," not nourishment. Anorexia and bulimia have become major health problems. On the other hand, obesity, too, is a major problem, especially with children getting less and less exercise.

In many ways our culture is structured to foster poor eating habits. Spend a Saturday morning watching the commercials on children's TV programs, and consider that most children spend more time in front of a television than in their classroom. Count the fast food restaurants in your neighborhood and watch who is bolting down food in what might be called a profane ritual. Investigate the nutritional adequacy of the meals in the school lunchroom, supposedly an educational setting. Are they serving formulated, fabricated, frivolous, fortified, fake foods? What foods are supermarkets displaying at children's eye level?

We should be constructing an environment that protects our children. Instead, we have a highly seductive environment that undermines their eating habits. Even an adult has trouble not eating junk food when he or she is surrounded by it. For children, who have less vision of the heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, or diabetes that might befall them decades later, the tentacles of a junk-food environment are virtually inescapable.

You will find many ways of coping with this treacherous environment in *Eat, Think, and Be Healthy!* Unlike most texts, it encourages children to examine the food available in their homes, at school, at neighborhood fast food restaurants, and supermarkets. The "Take-Home Tips" and "Cook It Together" activities involve parents in their children's new discoveries. Encouraging children to observe and change the junk-food culture in which they are living may be even more important than classroom teaching.

Never before in history has there been such an explosion in knowledge about nutrition. Studies show that as early as the second decade of life, arteries begin to clog, laying the groundwork for future heart attacks. What a child eats from puberty on may affect his or her later risk of prostate or breast cancer. Osteoporosis and hypertension are other diseases that appear to have their earliest roots in childhood–when lifelong eating habits are being formed.

In short, the scientific evidence for strong and clear dietary advice is now available. The American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, the National Institutes of Health Consensus Panel on Lowering Blood Cholesterol, and other private and government agencies have issued advisories on healthful eating. This book's chapter, "What's Inside Food?" acquaints children with foods that meet the experts' consistent recommendations to eat more fiber

and to eat less fat, salt, and sugar. Most importantly, the activities in those chapters make healthful foods as enticing and fun as the junk foods sold in vending machines and advertised on TV.

Creative Food Experiences for Children, a book I wrote a decade ago, awakens in younger children a sense of wonder about good food, and helps them develop a taste for good food. *Eat, Think, and Be Healthy!* is for children at a transition stage from childhood to adult eating habits. At this critical time, it offers a fascinating exploration into vital and exciting food and nutrition issues. Like *Creative Food Experiences for Children*, this book enables children to learn by doing. Educators will find it a helpful guide for using food to lead children to questions of who they are, and their individual needs for growth, health, disease prevention, and, ultimately, survival.

There is no better time than now to build a supportive environment for nurturing our children, and endowing them with a legacy of health. Parents, teachers, administrators and others involved in the food system must work both with one another and with our children to create an environment to nourish the next generation. *Eat, Think, and Be Healthy!* makes this process vital, alive, and challenging.

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INTRODUCTION

Why We Wrote This Book

"Eat, drink, and be merry," the old saying goes, "for tomorrow ye shall diet." But when the food and drink are too much of the wrong things, and "tomorrow" never comes, there isn't much to be merry about when it comes to your health.

Children are lucky—they have a lot of tomorrows to look forward to. They can choose not to eat the average American diet, which is rich in calories, fat, sugar, and sodium, but often poor in overall nutrition. They can take steps to avoid the conditions and diseases to which poor diets are increasingly linked.

They can, and for their health's sake, should do these things, because children are especially vulnerable. Poor diets can slow growth, decay new teeth, promote obesity, and sow the seeds of the same debilitating diseases that ultimately cause illness or death among adults: high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some types of cancer.

And physical effects are only part of the story. Children's intellects and personalities grow along with their bodies. School days are full of educational challenges that require long attention spans and great stamina. Poor nutritional habits can undermine these prerequisites to learning, as well as sap the strength children need for making new friends, interacting with family members, participating in sports and games, and simply feeling good about themselves.

But just because children *should* eat healthful diets doesn't mean they *will*. Look what they're up against. Fast-food outlets are ubiquitous; so are vending machines. Advertisers tout sugary sweets, salty snacks, and fatty fried foods, leaving the more nutritious foods to fend for themselves. And children, the unwitting targets of sophisticated marketing techniques, often fail to learn that they do, indeed, have a choice.

Giving children that choice is what this book is all about. The activities in *Eat, Think, and Be Healthy!* can help children think about what they eat, help them have the confidence to choose their own diets, and, most important, help them grow just as healthy as they can be.

Why You Need This Book

Scenario One: Lunchtime. Most of the kids turn up their noses at today's entree: mystery mish-mash. On your way to the teachers' lounge, you see half your class make a beeline to the junk-food vending machines. The other half heads to the dessert line. And who packed those unappealing brown-bag lunches, anyway? Is this any way to eat lunch?

Scenario Two: You spent a whole week teaching the class about nutrients. You hammered home the differences between fats, carbohydrates, and proteins. You quizzed the kids on vitamins A through K, and all the minerals, too. But for all you can tell, you were talking to a wall—nobody's habits seem to have changed.

What's the matter with these children? What's the matter with you?

Nothing's the matter with them or you. But something is the matter with the way nutrition is often taught to our children. We think there are two important ways to improve nutrition education, and we applied them to this book.

First, recognize the way 8-12 year-olds learn. Psychologist Jean Piaget and his colleagues—who helped the world understand how young minds work—theorized that children at this age use "concrete operational" thought. This means they can absorb concrete, here-and-now ideas, but not the abstract kind.

If there's one thing about nutrition, it's abstract—very abstract. (Have you ever seen a protein?) Hoping to shed some light on the way nutrition should be taught, Isobel Contento, Associate Professor at Columbia University Teacher's College, used Piaget's theories as a framework for studying the way children think about food and eating. She concluded that force-feeding this age group food facts and figures simply won't work—the children don't have the learning capacity to understand these ideas, much less the incentive to apply them to their own lives.

And that's what it's really all about, isn't it? Our goal in teaching children about nutrition is to help them form eating habits that will last a long, healthy lifetime. For example, memorizing a list of vitamins and the foods they're in won't do it; but learning to love vitamin-rich foods will.

We agree with Contento and other researchers who came to the same conclusions. That's why this book uses active learning experiences that help children see for themselves the good things about healthful foods and the not-so-good things about less healthful ones.

Take fat, for example. How much do we eat? To learn, the children see a stick of butter—the amount the average American eats each day—and compare that with the amount our bodies actually need: just one or two tablespoons. What's wrong with fat? To simulate what happens to the arteries of many people who go fat-happy, the children stuff shortening in drinking straws and watch it build up. Which foods are fatty? Kids love to paint; let them smear a selection of foods on brown paper to see which leave a greasy mark.

These are concrete experiences children will understand—and enjoy. How much simpler at this age than trying to memorize the seemingly unrelated foods in the "Basic Four" food groups and

making some sense out of their relation to health. And how much more effective!

The second way to improve nutrition education is to recognize who children are. Their worlds are strikingly simple from an adult's point of view–family, school, and friends–yet, how often do we fail to incorporate these worlds when we teach? This activity book tries to reach children where they live–and learn and laugh.

First, where they live. Even the best nutrition experiences won't amount to a hill of beans if the ideas aren't accepted or reinforced at home. We think Dorothy Rich has the right idea. As founder and president of the two-decades-old Home and School Institute, Rich thinks schools and families need to work together to help children achieve.

Taking a cue from the Institute, we believe that teachers and parents should be partners in nutrition education. That's why we wove parental involvement throughout the activities. We even added take-home pages packed with simple nutrition activities families can do together and recipes they can make together.

As far as school is concerned, the classroom activities in this book go beyond the classroom, because there's more to school than that! Talking with other students, teachers, school lunch personnel, the school nurse. . . evaluating school lunch. . . inviting people to class. . . taking the class to other people–these are just some of the ways *Eat, Think, and Be Healthy!* seeks to make that important link between nutrition education and the education process.

And finally, learning–at least in elementary school–is not a solitary pursuit. Children in grades three-to-six place increasing importance on their peer groups and friends. Our activities recognize the power of the peer in forming eating habits–both good and bad–and the importance of using the fun and dynamics of group experiences to drive health points home.

What's Inside

Eat, Think, and Be Healthy! can help you give children the nutritional head start they need. Plus, the book has the built-in ease of teaching *you* need.

Don't have time for a nutrition curriculum? Don't need it! Our six chapters take children on a food odyssey–from enjoying healthful eating to enjoying telling others about it. You can open the book just about anywhere and teach what you see. Or, if you want more structure, we recommend dipping into the chapters in sequence, using as little or as much as you like from each.

Here's what you'll find:

CHAPTER 1: FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD!–What good is good eating if you don't have fun? These activities help children stretch their food imaginations with new, healthful things to eat and new ways to enjoy them.

CHAPTER 2: WHAT'S INSIDE FOOD?–Now that the children have opened their minds and tastebuds to the joys of good eating, they can experience the qualities that make foods healthful–or otherwise. Fat, sugar, salt, fiber, and starch take center-stage in these hands-on activities.

CHAPTER 3: FOODS AND YOU–Who ever ate a food group

chart? The "Basic Four" may be fine for some, but this age group needs four food pointers they can swallow: "eat fewer fatty foods," "eat fewer salty foods," "eat fewer sugary foods," and "eat more high-fiber and starchy foods." This chapter helps children use their knowledge of what's inside foods to choose what's right for them.

CHAPTER 4: FOODS, YOU, AND YOUR WORLD–These activities relate healthful eating to the way children live. Who influences our eating habits? Where do we practice those habits? And how can we improve them? A focus on friends, family, fast-food, parties, school lunch, and other childhood staples help kids answer these questions for themselves.

CHAPTER 5: BE A SMART SHOPPER–Children who are wise to the ways of shopping are better equipped to make wise shopping decisions. Chapter Five introduces some important–and fun–first lessons in this vital consumer skill.

CHAPTER 6: PASS THE GOOD FOOD WORD–Who wants to keep a good thing secret? Because no one can ever know too much about healthful eating, these activities encourage children to share their new-found knowledge with others.

Wonder how you can fit nutrition activities into your day? It's easier than you think. Food is such an integral part of life that it blends neatly into virtually anything you teach. You'll find that most activities in this book relate to at least one area of intellectual, artistic, or physical endeavor. Check the top of each to see which of these skill areas are covered (or, check the **ACTIVITY INDEX** to find examples of a particular one):

Language Arts	Science	Music
Creative Writing	Social Studies	Drama
Mathematics	Art	Fitness

What Else is There?

• *Eat, Think, and Be Healthy!* has 56 experiential activities geared to the skill levels and interests of third-to-sixth graders. Many activities include eye-catching, reproducible **HANDOUTS**. Many also have extra challenges for more advanced students–look for the section, **OLDER KIDS CAN ALSO**. . . .

• A nutrition education book would be like an empty plate if it didn't include **RECIPES**. Ours has plenty, and we made a special effort to make them simple enough for use in the elementary-school classroom or any location where cooking facilities are at a premium. For your convenience, each recipe lists the equipment you will need. We also included a **RECIPE INDEX** at the back of the book, and tips for **COOKING WITH KIDS** on page xv.

• Have some extra classroom time on your hands? Turn to the **NIBBLES** page in each chapter for a selection of short and simple nutrition fun.

• As we said earlier, parents are important partners in nutrition education. Send home the **TAKE-HOME TIPS** activities and the **COOK IT TOGETHER** recipes included with each chapter, and you'll recruit some new enthusiasts in the quest for good foods. Also, see **A WORD ABOUT WORKING WITH PARENTS**, which follows this section.

• Food is such a fascinating topic, it seems everyone has something to say about it! Find some selected books, organiza-

tions, and other resources in each chapter's list of **RESOURCES.**

• Each activity has the built-in background you need. But if you want to learn more about the connection between diet and health, check out **NUTRITION IN A NUTSHELL**, in the Appendix. It reviews the latest dietary recommendations and presents some basic nutrition information in an easy-to-digest format.

So, read on. . . and eat, think, and be healthy!

A WORD ABOUT WORKING WITH PARENTS

What's the word? "Do!" You'll be glad you did.

Good nutrition isn't a one-lesson proposition; nor is it something that can be completely taught in one semester or even one year.

The key to success is getting parents (or guardians) involved. If you don't, the good things you teach in the classroom may not be practiced or reinforced at home. If you do, however, the children will be better able to live what they learn. Two other nice things might happen, as well: the families will improve their eating habits, and they'll become more involved in their children's education.

This book gives you ample opportunity to get parents excited about good foods. First, each chapter includes a **TAKE-HOME TIPS** page, with mini-activities families can do together. Duplicate the pages, have each child sign them in the spaces indicated, and send them home.

But remember, these activities are not "homework" in the traditional sense. Encourage parents to try the activities, and encourage your students to initiate them, but don't hold them out as a requirement—you'll quickly wither some blossoming enthusiasm.

Another way to involve parents is to give them healthful recipes that are fun to cook and eat with kids. That's why each chapter also includes a page called **COOK IT TOGETHER**. Each page has one or more recipes that relate to nutrition concepts the children are learning. For example, with Chapter 4, "Foods, You, and Your World"—which explores social influences such as fast-food restaurants—we offer healthful homemade recipes with a fast-food theme: oven-fried chicken and oven-fried french fries.

In addition to these at-home materials, *Eat, Think, and Be Healthy!* also offers activities that invite parents to participate at school: discussions, demonstrations, tasting parties, and more.

But don't stop there! Write notes to parents, explaining what the children are learning, and why. Send home the children's completed projects, or let parents see them on display at school. Invite parents to lend a hand and participate in lots of food-related activities—field trips, school lunch, tasting parties, and more. And, use them as resources. You'll have a wealth of expertise and experience at your fingertips.

One additional way to involve parents is to seek their assistance in purchasing or preparing foods for the classroom. It's

no mistake that many activities in this book involve eating. After all, cooking and tasting healthful foods are some of the best ways to learn to love healthful foods! But these activities can be too expensive for you or your school budget to take on alone. If parents can afford now and then to chip in a small sum, or to send foods to school, actively encourage their support.

But be sensitive to the fact that not every family can absorb these extra expenses. A good way to avoid embarrassment in such cases is to gently encourage, rather than require, everyone to participate. If many cannot, try the ideas listed in **COOKING WITH KIDS**, which follows this section. Or, stick with foods that go a long way for a little money, such as soups, grains, and dried beans and peas.

If you want more pointers on working with parents, the Home and School Institute may have just what you need. This nonprofit educational institution works to improve the quality of education by pooling the resources of schools, homes, and communities. For a list of "how-to" books for teachers and parents, write: Home and School Institute, Special Projects Office, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

COOKING WITH KIDS

Cooking with kids doesn't have to be complicated. It's really just a matter of knowing what you want to do and doing it safely. Here's what we recommend:

Getting Organized

These hints–which were adapted from *Cooking and Eating With Children*, a brochure by the Association for Childhood Education International–will help make cooking time smooth as yogurt!

- Make sure it's legal to cook in your classroom.
- See if the PTA or other school-related organization can make some funds available for cooking expenses. Local organizations or businesses may be interested in helping to foot the bill or even in donating some food. The school food-service staff is another resource for freebies. And, of course, enlist the aid of parents, who can provide money, food, or, at the very least, support.
- Make sure you have all the necessary equipment and ingredients before you begin a recipe. Most in this book call for the type of equipment classrooms can accommodate: a toaster oven, blender, hot plate, and so on. You might also want to keep certain essentials on hand, in a special cart or container:
  - –Mixing bowls
  - –Measuring cups and spoons
  - –Saucepans
  - –Potholders
  - –Stirring spoons
  - –Paring knives
  - –Can opener
  - –Cutting boards
  - –Extension cords for electrical equipment
  - –Drinking straws, toothpicks, or wooden tongue depressors for tasting
  - –Napkins
  - –Dishes and utensils
  - –Dishwashing soap, sponge, paper towels, and kitchen towels
- Write each recipe so all the children can see.
- Decide who is responsible for what.
- For your convenience, the classroom recipes in this book have the equipment clearly spelled out. You can make the cooking experience a problem-solving one as well, though, if you let the children figure out what equipment is needed.

Cooking Safely

The same safety rules apply whether you're cooking with children or by yourself. The major difference is, you've been cooking for many years; most children are only beginners. As a result, what may be second-nature to you—like using a potholder—may not even occur to a child.

So, bear these reminders in mind:

- Supervise cooking experiences closely. Get more adults if you need them.
- Insist that potholders be used—and used properly.
- Demonstrate safe cutting techniques and any other potentially dangerous—or frustrating—tasks.
- Keep hot pots and appliances in out-of-the-way spots so children can't knock them over or burn themselves.
- Tasting is an important part of cooking, but it can spread germs. Let the children use a drinking straw, toothpick, or wooden tongue depressor to dip into a food and taste it. The implement should then be discarded—not used for more tastes. (Try using a chunk of bread to taste soups, stews, and other liquidy foods.)
- Another important way to keep germs away is for everyone to wash their hands before handling any food.
- Be aware of children with infectious diseases or illnesses, and nose-blowers, sneezers, and coughers.
- Tell children with long hair to keep it tied back.
- Keep perishable foods (like dairy products, meat, poultry, and fish) refrigerated until cooking time.
- Wash utensils, surfaces, and hands thoroughly with soap and hot water after handling raw meat, poultry, or fish.
- Perishable foods can begin to spoil if left at room temperature more than a few hours—especially in hot classrooms.
- If you don't plan to eat a cold food immediately, refrigerate it. Hot food should be kept hot—or else stored in the refrigerator—until it's time to eat.
- Cook meat, poultry, and fish thoroughly.

Resources

Cooking and Eating With Children: A Way to Learn, Oralie McAfee. Association for Childhood Education International (Washington), 1978.

The Food Safety and Inspection Service offers several free food safety publications that deal primarily with the safe handling of meat and poultry. Request "The Safe Food Book," "Safe Food To Go," and a list of other free publications from: U.S. Department of Agriculture, FSIS, Room 1165-S, Washington, D.C. 20250.

FSIS also runs the toll-free Meat and Poultry Hotline, staffed weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern time. Call: (800) 535-4555. In Washington, D.C., call 447-3333.

The Food and Drug Administration offers free publications on a variety of food safety topics. Request a list from: FDA, HFW-40, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20857.

For "The Food Keeper," a brochure with a comprehensive chart of food storage recommendations, write: Food Marketing Institute, 1750 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Also, your local Cooperative Extension office is bound to have some useful food safety brochures or advice. Look in the phone book under the county or city government listing for the office nearest you.

CHAPTER 1

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD!

Activity 1
FOOD IS DELICIOUS . . . AND SO MUCH MORE!
Explore the sensory wonders of healthful foods.

Activity 2
MAKE A SPROUTZA
Grow sprouts and put them on—what else—pizza!

Activity 3
PICK IT! EAT IT!
Learn the joys of plucking fruit from the vine.

Activity 4
BEFRIEND A FOOD
No, those unfamiliar foods won't bite you. Bite *them!*

Activity 5
BE A MORNING MAGICIAN
Break out of the breakfast routine with creative foods.

Activity 6
BUILD A BETTER SANDWICH
Lay a healthful foundation and pile on the fillings.

Activity 7
MUNCH A MASTERPIECE
Get artistic with sandwich spreads and crackers.

Activity 8
BAG YOURSELF A SALAD
Go toss a salad!

Activity 9
SOUP OF THE EVENING, BEAUTIFUL SOUP!
Make a soup even the Mock Turtle would smile about.

If you've seen dew glisten on a tomato plant, touched the kitten-soft skin of a peach, sniffed the aroma of home-baked bread, heard the lazy bubble-pop-bubble of a simmering soup, or savored the bittersweet bite of a sparkling grapefruit—you know about the wonders of food. It's glorious!

How many of us, though, forget to take a moment to look, touch, smell, listen, and taste? And how many of us forget to impart that sense of wonder and delight to children?

Kids care about the here and now. Eating for the health of it? That's a little hard to grasp. But eating healthful foods for the joy of it? That's the ticket to good nutrition.

While food appreciation can't be taught, it can be drawn out and nurtured. You have all the ingredients you need: a world full of fascinating foods and a class full of hungry minds and mouths.

So, unleash some eating excitement with the activities in this chapter! Let the children stretch their food imaginations by trying new foods and discovering brand-new things about familiar ones. Make an adventure of mealtimes and snacks. Explore the magic of creating foods, from seed to side dish. And, most of all, have fun!

Study after study has shown that active, joyful learning is the most effective kind. We want children to learn to eat well to grow up healthy and strong. What better way to help them than with good foods and good fun!

But keep in mind—old habits die hard, even in eight-year-olds. Children who grow up on cheese curls and chocolate chips may turn up their noses at fresh vegetables and fruits. Be prepared for kids who prefer candy to cantaloupe, whole milk to skim, and hot dogs to fish. (And be prepared to recognize these preferences in yourself!)

And finally, be patient. Like most things worthwhile, good nutrition takes time. Nothing turns off a budding food-fancier faster than pressure or ridicule. In other words, don't condemn cola-guzzlers; just affectionately challenge them to be orange-juice-sippers.

ACTIVITY ONE

FOOD IS DELICIOUS . . . AND SO MUCH MORE!

Related Subjects

Language arts, art, music, drama

Description

If you just taste food, you're missing out on most of the fun! This activity combines looking, touching, smelling, drawing, listening, music-making, and more, to encourage children to "eat" with all of their senses.

Purpose

To explore the sensory wonders of some healthful foods.

Materials and Resources

Assortment of healthful foods, such as oranges, bananas, apples, carrots, unshelled peanuts, uncooked dried beans and peas, whole-grain breads, and unbuttered popcorn without salt
Paper
Pencil

Procedure

1. Collect and display an assortment of healthful foods that represent a variety of shapes, sizes, textures, and smells. Since most of these foods will be touched and manipulated, include foods with protective skins or shells (like oranges and peanuts) and enough of other unprotected foods, such as bread slices, so each child can experiment with and taste one.

2. Ask the children to think of all the ways they can enjoy these foods—besides eating them. Talk about the other senses: seeing, touching, smelling, and hearing.

3. Invite the children to look carefully at the foods and to pretend they are seeing them for the very first time. Perhaps the

children can pretend they are from another country or planet.

Do these "seeing" exercises:

–What are the shapes of the foods? Use your hands to trace their shapes in the air. Make your body look like them.

–Name all the colors you see in the foods. Is a red apple only red, or are there other colors, like yellow, green, and brown?

–Draw pictures of the foods. Try to make some of the drawings as realistic as possible. Make the others as unrealistic as possible (for example, a round, wrinkly, blue banana).

–Cut open an orange or other citrus fruit. Hold a thin piece up to the light and describe what you see.

4. Let the children get their hands on these "touching" exercises:

–Look at a food closely and draw a picture of it. Now close your eyes, feel the food, and draw another picture. What new things did you "see" with your hands?

–Which foods are the most pleasing to touch? Why?

–Name as many words–real or made-up–as you can that describe the ways foods feel.

5. Catch a whiff of these exercises:

–What is your very favorite food smell? Is it also your very favorite food? Think about your least favorites, too.

–Vote for the best smelling food in the display. List some words that describe it.

–Smell one of the foods and try to remember the smell. Look at another completely different food and pretend it smells like the food in your memory.

–Some food fragrances remind us of other things. Smell a food and try to remember another time or place you experienced similar thoughts or feelings.

6. Some foods can be music to our ears. Now hear these:

–Move a piece of paper across a soft food, like a piece of bread or a peach. Now do the same with a rough food, like pineapple. What's the difference? What sounds do other objects make when they touch the foods?

–Play a record or sing, and accompany the music by stroking, tapping, or shaking foods.

–Put some foods or pieces of foods in a cup, cover it with your hands, and shake it. Make rattles using dried beans and peas, pasta, dry fruit seeds, or popcorn (popped or unpopped).

–Chew a food. Listen to the sound and describe it. What is the noisiest food you've ever chewed? The quietest one?

–If foods could talk, what would they sound like? What would they say?

7. Encourage the children to think of and demonstrate other sensory experiences with foods.

8. And finally, eat the leftovers!

ACTIVITY TWO

MAKE A "SPROUTZA"

Related Subjects

Science

Description

What's easy to grow and fun to eat? Sprouts! The children harvest their own crops of mung bean or other types of sprouts and use them as an ingredient in pizza with sprouts–sproutza!

Purpose

To experience the full range of a food–from seed to preparation to consumption.

Materials and Resources

Mung beans
Quart jar

Nylon stocking, cheesecloth, or fine wire Mesh
Rubber band or string
Water
Ingredients and equipment for "Sproutza" recipe included with this activity

Procedure

1. One of the easiest crops to grow in the classroom is sprouts–from adzuki bean sprouts to wheat sprouts. Try mung bean sprouts for this activity. They have a mild flavor and a crunchy texture.

2. Ask the children if they know where every fruit, vegetable, flower, and tree comes from. The answer: seeds. Explain that the first step from seed to plant is a sprout. Sprouts are seeds that have grown their main roots and are beginning to grow leaves. Many plant sprouts are simple to grow and delicious to eat.

3. Here are directions for making about 2-3 cups of mung bean sprouts:

–Put ¼ cup rinsed beans into a quart jar.
–Fill jar half-full with lukewarm water.
–Cover opening with a nylon stocking, cheesecloth, or fine wire mesh and secure tightly with a rubber band or string.
–Let the beans soak overnight.
–Turn the jar upside down and drain the water from the beans.
–Rinse the beans with cool water and drain as much water off as possible. Put the jar on its side–either in a dark place, like a cupboard, or wrapped in aluminum foil (don't cover the opening).
–Rinse the seeds two separate times each day, drain them, and store them, as above.
–After about 3-5 days, they'll be ready. (You may want to put them in a sunny window to bring out the green.) Rinse the sprouts well and store in the refrigerator, or use them as a topping for "sproutza."

SPROUTZA

Here's a fun, easy, and delicious way to combine sprouts with a favorite food: pizza. The recipe is adapted from Jane Brody's "Pizza Patty," in Jane Brody's *Nutrition Book*, W.W. Norton and Company, Inc. 1981.

Makes two servings

Equipment
Toaster oven
Knife
Spoon
Drinking glass

Ingredients
1 English muffin, cut in half
2 tablespoons tomato sauce
2 slices tomato
Bean sprouts
2 slices part-skim mozzarella cheese
Oregano

Directions

Top each half muffin with tomato sauce, one tomato slice, a sprinkling of oregano, and enough sprouts to cover.

Use the top of a drinking glass to cut the cheese into two rounds, one for each muffin.

Cook in toaster oven until the cheese melts.

ACTIVITY THREE

PICK IT! EAT IT!

Related Subjects
Social studies

Description
Where are the freshest fruits and vegetables? Right off the vine! Before visiting a pick-your-own farm, the children learn about the varieties of produce they are likely to find there and identify the types they want to pick.

Purpose
To learn about and appreciate the fresh-grown produce available in the community.

Materials and Resources
Library

Resources of the local Cooperative Extension Service office or the State Department of Agriculture

Procedure

1. Ask the children to name the most delicious fresh fruit or vegetable they ever ate. Where did it come from? What was so good about it?

2. Have they have ever eaten a fresh-picked fruit or vegetable–picked, in fact, by themselves? If so, have them describe where this took place, how the food tasted, and so on.

3. Contact your local office of the Cooperative Extension Service or the State Department of Agriculture for a list of pick-your-own farms, the produce they offer, and the dates they are available. Choose a farm that has produce the children can eat raw (after careful washing, of course, to remove surface dirt and pesticides).

4. Before the trip, the children should consult encyclopedias and other library materials to learn about the foods they will pick. What are the various varieties? With apples, for example, there are many–some are great to eat out-of-hand, while others taste better cooked. What do the different varieties look like? How do they grow? What are their growing seasons? What nutrients do the foods contain?

5. Encourage the children to ask questions at the farm, too.

6. After the trip, have the children wash and eat the fruit together. How does it compare with the produce that comes from the grocery store? What are some other ways to get delicious fresh produce? (roadside stands, farmers markets, and home or community gardens).

7. The children might also want to search out recipes for their produce. Baked apples, poached fruit, steamed squash, and stir-fried vegetables are delicious, healthful treats that are fun and easy to make.

BEFRIEND A FOOD

ACTIVITY FOUR

Related Subjects

Creative writing

Description

Everyone can name a few foods they've never tried before. Here's a chance to be adventurous and experience these and other tastes. Creative letters to new food "friends" complete the activity.

Purpose

To try some new foods.

Materials and Resources

Various foods you and the children bring to the classroom
Paper and pencils

Procedure

1. Ask everyone to name some foods they've never tried before and some possible reasons why (perhaps because of the way it looks, feels, or smells; or because a friend or family member doesn't like it).

2. Each child should choose at least one food he or she would be willing to try.

3. Have the children bring samples of their chosen foods from home. You may want to provide foods such as whole-grain breads, skim milk, low-fat cottage cheese, raw vegetables, or other potentially unpopular ones.

4. Or, include some exotic fruits and vegetables in the search for new food friends:
Kiwifruit–This egg-shaped, brown-skinned fruit has emerald-green flesh. Some people describe its taste as a cross between a strawberry and a banana.

Spaghetti squash–Bright-yellow on the outside–stringy, like spaghetti, on the inside!
Carambola–Slice this deeply grooved, golden fruit and you'll literally see stars.

5. Make sure everyone has at least one food to try.

6. Encourage the children to express their reasons for wanting to "befriend" these foods (for example, the food is beautiful, smells good, or is good for you).

7. Encourage the children to voice their trepidations, too. This will help to create a lighthearted, supportive atmosphere where the children feel they can be adventurous without fear of failure.

8. At a given signal, everyone tastes his or her food at the same time. (Your participation in this activity will benefit the children and you.)

9. Ask the children for their immediate reactions. How many like the new foods? How many do not? Why?

10. One way to communicate with friends is by writing to them. Have the children compose "letters" to the foods, describing their feelings about the classroom encounter. Some questions to consider: Do you really feel like you befriended the food? What didn't you like about it before? Have your feelings changed? How and why?

ACTIVITY FIVE
BE A MORNING MAGICIAN

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description
Breakfast doesn't have to be boring! The children "brainstorm" a list of creative breakfast choices and make and taste some at a classroom breakfast party. Two "magical" breakfast recipes are included.

Purpose
To think about, prepare, and try some non-traditional breakfast foods.

Materials and Resources
Chalkboard or chart paper; chalk or marker
Ingredients and equipment for breakfast recipes included with this activity (optional)

Procedure
1. Ask the children to describe what they ate for breakfast the morning of this activity. Record the number of responses for each type of food (for example, the number of children who ate cereal).

2. Chances are, the responses will reveal fairly traditional breakfast choices. Discuss this with the children. Do they think their breakfasts are boring, or at least not as interesting as they could be? Who would like to try something different? If anyone says no, tell them you think they just might change their minds after this activity.

3. Explain that a good way to generate lots of creative breakfast ideas is with a "brainstorming" session. The rules are:
–Don't be afraid to voice your ideas, because if you stick to the subject, every answer is acceptable.
–Because there is no such thing as a wrong answer in this exercise, no one may comment on or question anyone else's response.
–Listen carefully to the others' responses and try to build on them. For instance, if one child says "cottage cheese and cinnamon," perhaps another child might think of "cottage cheese, cinnamon, and grated apple on toast."

4. Write the subject of the brainstorming exercise for all to see: CREATIVE BREAKFAST IDEAS. Give the children these general ideas if you need to get their creative juices flowing:
–dinner leftovers for breakfast
–whole-grain alternatives to white toast
–things to do with fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables (example: plain low-

fat yogurt mixed with chopped fresh fruits)
–breakfast sandwiches (example: chicken salad on whole wheat bread with sliced tomatoes)
–fancy cereals from plain ones (example: Shredded Wheat with sliced strawberries and bananas)
–healthful "snack foods" for breakfast (example: cut-up vegetables, curried yogurt dip, and whole-grain crackers)

5. Begin the brainstorm. Write down every response until the children run out of ideas.

6. Discuss the list. Which breakfast ideas seem most appealing? Has anyone tried any of them? Which ideas would you like to try at a breakfast party?

7. Create a breakfast party menu together. Enlist the aid of parents to help with costs and supplies.

8. As with all food preparation activities, follow the cooking and food safety tips on page xvi.

TERRIFIC TOAST

Makes one serving

Equipment
Toaster oven
Measuring cup
Knife
Cutting board

Ingredients
1 slice whole-wheat or other whole-grain bread
¼ cup low-fat cottage cheese
Sliced apples, bananas, peaches, strawberries, or other fruit–alone or in combination
Raisins
Cinnamon

Directions
Toast the bread lightly in a toaster oven.
Spread on ¼ cup cheese.
Top with sliced fruit, a sprinkling of raisins, and cinnamon.
Return bread to toaster oven until toppings are warm.

BANANA SPLIT CEREAL

Makes one serving

Equipment
Knife
Cutting board
Bowl
Spoon

Ingredients
Unsweetened cereal (Cheerios, wheat germ, Grape-Nuts, etc.)
Bananas, sliced lengthwise
Sliced fresh fruit
Raisins or other dried fruit, chopped
Nuts
Low-fat milk
Low-fat plain yogurt (optional)

Directions
Sprinkle one serving of cereal into a bowl.
Arrange a banana half on top.
Sprinkle with fresh and dried fruit (used sparingly–it sticks to teeth!) and nuts.
Top with milk.
Finish off with a dollop of yogurt, if desired.

BUILD A BETTER SANDWICH

ACTIVITY SIX

Related subjects
Art, language arts

Description
It's fun to build things. Why not build delicious sandwich combinations? The children draw pictures of and label their own creative combinations, using a list of sandwich breads and fillings as food for thought.

Purpose
To experiment with the countless ways breads and fillings can be combined to make sandwiches.

Materials and Resources
"Build a Better Sandwich" handout
Paper
Pencils, crayons, or other art materials

Procedure
1. Ask the children to describe their

favorite sandwiches. What is the fanciest sandwich they ever ate? What is the most delicious? The largest? The smallest? The funniest? Where did they eat the sandwiches? Who made them?

2. Ask the children to name all the types of breads they can think of. Which are their favorites? Are they homemade or store-bought? What else can be used to hold sandwich fillings? (Crackers, lettuce leaves, and celery are some examples.)

3. What kinds of meat, poultry, fish, and egg fillings go into sandwiches? What other foods can be used as sandwich fillings?

4. Distribute copies of "Build a Better Sandwich." This handout lists a variety of "foundations" (breads) and "building materials" (fillings), and has spaces for the children to list their own.

5. Have the children read the ingredients aloud, including the ones they added. Can the group think of any more?

6. Tell the children to use some of the ingredients to "build" a creative sandwich. They might want to draw a picture of the finished sandwich (or of the individual components) or use paper cutouts. Whichever method they choose, they should name their sandwiches and label the ingredients.

7. Encourage the children to display and describe their creations. Some adventurous types might want to brown-bag the real things to school. Or, the class can choose the best sandwich combination and build a jumbo healthful sandwich together, using a long loaf of French or Italian bread.

ACTIVITY SEVEN

MUNCH A MASTERPIECE

Related Subjects:
Art

Description
The children "paint" and decorate large flat crackers with healthful spreads, nuts, seeds, and cut-up vegetables. Two spread recipes are included.

Purpose
To make and eat some healthful snacks.

Materials and Resources
Matzohs, melba toast, firm flatbread, whole-grain crackers, or other low-fat, low-salt crackers firm enough to stand up to spreads
Ingredients for spread recipes in Step 1
Spoons and bowls for making the spreads
Fresh vegetables
Seeds (poppy, sesame, caraway, celery)
Knives for cutting vegetable trims
Knives and spoons for spreading the spreads
Napkins

Procedure
1. Let the children work together to make one or both of these spreads:
Cheese and Basil–Combine 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese, 3 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese, and 1 teaspoon basil.
Dilly Cheese–Mash 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese. Stir in 1 teaspoon each lemon juice and dill.

2. Explain that the children will use these spreads, plus some vegetables and seeds, to "paint" and decorate crackers.

3. Set up the spreads, vegetables, seeds, crackers, and utensils on a table, and let the children create!

4. Tell the children they can make and eat as many decorated crackers as they like, but to save the one they think is best.

5. When the activity has run its course, have the children display their most creative concoctions. Let the other children circulate among the "masterpieces." (Before the activity, you might also have the children choose "contest" categories—such as silliest cracker, most beautiful cracker, and so on—and create snacks that fit into these categories.)

ACTIVITY EIGHT
BAG YOURSELF A SALAD

Related subjects
Language arts

Description
The children use a paper-and-pencil activity to choose ingredients for a salad, then create the salad in a plastic bag.

Purpose
To prepare and taste a vegetable salad.

Materials and Resources
"Bag Yourself a Salad" handout
Paper and pencils
Grocery bag
Salad ingredients (see Procedure)
Knives
Cutting boards
Plastic trash bag (fresh out of the box)
Large bowl
Salad bowls or plates
Forks
Ingredients and equipment for salad dressing recipes included with this activity (optional)

Procedure
1. Distribute copies of "Bag Yourself a Salad." This handout lists the names of some ingredients (except salad dressings) that may be added to vegetable salads. The blank spaces are for the children's own ideas.

2. Read the names of the ingredients together. Have the children ever tasted any of the ingredients? What other vegetables or fruits are good in salads? What was the most unusual salad ingredient they ever ate? What was the best? The worst? The children may list any additional ideas they think of or hear during the discussion.

3. Tell the children to each choose three ingredients from the list, write the names on strips of paper, and place them inside a grocery bag.

4. Each child should pick one slip of paper out of the grocery bag and read aloud the name of the salad ingredient.

5. Make a list of the ingredients as they are named. Ask parents to assist in buying them or to donate a small sum so you and the children can make the purchases together.

6. The children should wash the produce—to get rid of surface dirt and pesticides—and, of course, their hands.

7. All ingredients go into a large, clean plastic bag. Shake it up and serve!

8. The children might want to make one or both of these salad dressings:

Buttermilk-Herb Dressing

Yield: 1 cup

Equipment
Measuring cups
Knife
Measuring spoons
Jar with lid

Ingredients
1 cup buttermilk
1 tablespoon prepared mustard
1 teaspoon minced onion
⅛ teaspoon dried dill weed
2 teaspoons finely chopped parsley, or 1 teaspoon dried parsley
⅛ teaspoon salt
Black pepper

Directions
Combine all ingredients in a jar, cover tightly and shake to blend.

Chill overnight or for several hours (not essential if you want to use it right away).

Shake well before serving.

Thousand Island Dressing

This recipe was adapted form one that appears in Marian Burros' cookbook, *Pure and Simple*, published by Berkley Publishing Corporation, 1978.

Makes 1½ cups

Equipment
Measuring cups
Measuring spoons

Ingredients
1 cup plain low-fat yogurt
½ cup chili sauce
1 tablespoon pickle relish

Directions
Combine ingredients. Refrigerate if you don't plan to use it right away.

SOUP OF THE EVENING, BEAUTIFUL SOUP!

ACTIVITY NINE

Related subjects
Creative writing

Description
The mock turtle in *Alice in Wonderland* cried when he sang about turtle soup. But the soup in this activity will make children smile! The children make the recipe together and write a poem about the experience.

Purpose
To make and taste a healthful soup.

Materials and Resources
Ingredients and equipment for the "Beautiful Soup" recipe included with this activity

Procedure
1. Read the children this poem from Alice in Wonderland:

Beautiful Soup, so rich and green,
Waiting in a hot tureen!
Who for such dainties would not stoop?
Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!
Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!
Beau–ootiful Soo–oop!
Beau–ootiful Soo–oop!
Soo-oop of the e–e–evening,
Beautiful, beautiful Soup!"

2. Ask the children if they think they would like turtle soup. Why or why not? What kinds of soup do they like? When do they like to eat them? What characteristics of soup make it different from other foods? Does soup always have to be hot?

3. The children can make their own "beautiful soup" together.

BEAUTIFUL SOUP

This recipe was adapted from Molly Katzen's "Gypsy Soup" recipe in her book, *The Moosewood Cookbook*, p blished by W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1985.

Makes at least 16 tasting-size servings

Equipment
Hot plate
Large saucepan
Knives
Cutting boards
Can opener
Vegetable peelers
Wooden stirring spoon

Ingredients
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
½ cup chopped celery (1 large stalk)
2 cups peeled, chopped sweet potatoes
3 cups water
2 teaspoons paprika
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon dried basil
Dash cinnamon
Dash cayenne
1 cup chopped fresh tomatoes
¾ cup chopped green pepper (1 large)
1½ cups cooked chickpeas
1 tablespoon reduced-sodium soy sauce

Directions
Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Saute the onion, celery, and sweet potatoes for about 5 minutes.

Add the water, paprika, turmeric, basil, cinnamon, and cayenne.

Bring the soup to a boil.

Reduce heat, cover the pot, and simmer the soup for 15 minutes.

Add the tomatoes, green pepper, and chickpeas.

Simmer the soup for about 10 minutes longer.

Stir in the soy sauce, then serve the soup.

4. After the children have made and eaten the soup, tell them to think about the experience and write a poem about it.

Older Kids Can Also . . .
–Explore the sodium content of processed

soups. Many, many canned and dry soups contain loads of sodium, but some manufacturers are making lower-salt versions. The children can walk through a supermarket and look for examples of low-sodium soups. How many kinds are there? About how many kinds of "regular" soups are there? Are the low-sodium soups as easy to find as the others? How do they compare in cost?

BUILD A BETTER SANDWICH

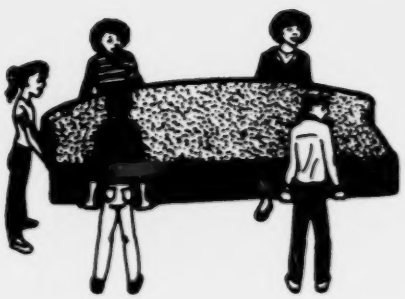
What does it take to build a better sandwich? It's sort of like building a house. First you need a good foundation, and then you need the right building materials. Get your tools ready, and start building!

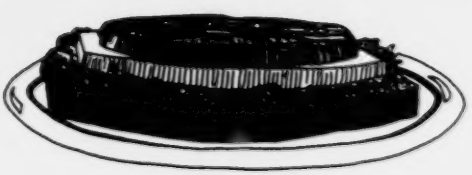
Foundations

whole-wheat bread
cracked wheat bread
rye bread
pumpernickel bread
raisin bread
pita bread
muffin
cracker
roll
bagel
tortilla

Building Materials

chicken
turkey
beef
tuna
sardines
salmon
egg
cheese
grated cheese
cottage cheese
peanut butter
baked beans
radish slices
grated carrots
chopped celery
bean sprouts
lettuce
red cabbage
spinach
onion
cucumber
red pepper rings
nuts
sunflower seeds
chopped apple
sliced banana
orange sections
sliced pears
berries
pineapple chunks
dried fruits
yogurt
mustard
catsup





BAG YOURSELF A SALAD

asparagus, slightly cooked
bean sprouts
beans (cooked garbanzo, pinto, or kidney)
beets
broccoli
carrots
cauliflower
celery
cucumber
eggplant (cooked)
green beans
green cabbage
green pepper
lettuce
mushrooms
onion
orange or grapefruit sections
parsley
parsnips
peas or pea pods
potatoes (white or sweet, cooked)
pumpkin seeds
radishes
red cabbage
red pepper
romaine
spinach
sunflower seeds
tofu
tomatoes
turnips
watercress
zucchini
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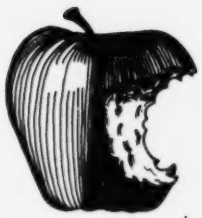


NIBBLES

Sampling the Seasons

What would fall be without pumpkins? Or summer without watermelons? Name a season and have the children close their eyes and imagine it—the weather, the activities, the fun—and the foods they would eat. Pictures, essays, and tasting parties can bring these daydreams to life.

Edible Rainbows

The children arrange fruits and vegetables in a rainbow design that includes the colors of the spectrum: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet.

Taste Test

Whole-wheat, pumpernickel, white, rye. . . . Which bread tastes the best? Blindfold the children and let them test the tastes. Other foods to try: Skim, low-fat, and whole milk—which is which? Vegetables cut into identical sizes and shapes—what exactly are you eating?

New! New! New!

The children invent a completely original food, then draw and name it. How does it feel, taste, and smell? Who eats it? When? Where? Why? How?

Lovely to Look At

Pasta comes in so many sizes, shapes, and colors. Dried beans and peas, too. Let the children layer these in clear, glass jars with other beautiful, long-lasting foods—rice, herbs, and seeds.

Lovely to Smell

Herbs and spices are everything nice! Give the children cotton balls to dip into these delights and make their own custom-made scents. (Ground herbs and spices work the best.)

Eat All About It

Have the children look for passages describing food and eating in the books they read. Ask them to imagine the sensations the author describes. Do the words make the sight, feel, scent, and taste come alive? Which words are the most effective? The children can keep a list and try to write some lip-smacking stories themselves.

TAKE-HOME TIPS

Who said food is just something to eat?

_____ [student's name] is learning that you can use your eyes, nose, ears, hands, and imagination to enjoy good foods. Here are some things you can do together:

• Take a sensory tour of the grocery store. Look at the packages, the produce, and all the sights. Sniff the smells. Listen to the sounds of food being stacked on shelves and bins. Feel all the shapes food takes. Share the sensations. Then go home and eat!

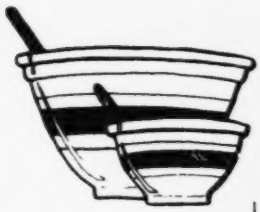
• Do some taste-tests at home. Which kind of bread tastes best? Which apple is the sweetest? Which orange is the juiciest?

• Team up to make some healthful snacks. Try:
–fruit kabobs (fresh fruit strung on a toothpick)
–fruit and vegetable sculptures (have you ever eaten a snack that looked like a cat?)
–baked sweet potatoes
–whole-grain bread spread with skim-milk ricotta and sprinkled with cinnamon

• Plan and make a dinner together.

• Try a new food together.

• Have an upside-down food day–dinner foods for breakfast and breakfast foods for dinner. Breakfast doesn't have to be the same old foods all the time!



COOK IT TOGETHER

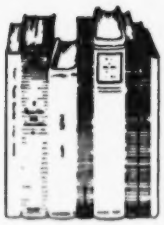
Good foods smell, look, and taste good. They even feel good! Good foods can also make *us* feel good. Here's a recipe that's all these things wrapped up in one (adapted from Rice Cream Pudding, a recipe in *Laurel's Kitchen*, by Laurel Robertson, Carol Flinders, and Bronwen Godfrey, and published by Nilgiri Press, 1976).

SOOTHING RICE PUDDING

Makes about 4 cups

½ cup uncooked brown rice
1 cup water
2½ cups skim milk
¼ cup brown sugar
3 tablespoons whole wheat flour
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ cup raisins

1. Put the water and rice in a saucepan. Bring to a boil. Cover the saucepan tightly and simmer for about 30 minutes.
2. Add milk and raisins and bring to a boil again. Cover and simmer for another 15 minutes. Take saucepan off the heat and stir in sugar.
3. Take 1 cup of the rice mixture from the saucepan and put it in a small bowl. Stir the flour into the mixture.
4. Return the mixture to the pot. Simmer 5 minutes more, stirring constantly.
5. Cool slightly. Stir in vanilla. Serve warm or cold, with extra milk if desired.



RESOURCES

Cookbooks and books about food for teachers and parents:

The American Heart Association Cookbook, Ruth Eshleman and Mary Winston. Ballantine Books (New York), 1973.

Cooking and Eating With Children: A Way to Learn, Oralie McAfee. Association for Childhood Education International (3615 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016), 1974.

Diet for a Small Planet, F.M. Lappé. Ballantine Books (New York), 1982.

Jane Brody's Good Food Book, Jane Brody. W.W. Norton and Company, Inc. (New York), 1985.

Jane Brody's Nutrition Book, Jane Brody. W.W. Norton and Company, Inc. (New York), 1981.

Laurel's Kitchen, Laurel Robertson, Carol Flinders, and Bronwen Godfrey. Nilgiri Press (Petaluma, Calif.), 1976.

Pure and Simple, Marian Burros. Berkley Publishing Corporation (New York), 1978.

Recipes for a Small Planet, F.M. Lappé. Ballantine Books (New York), 1973.

Supermarket Handbook, Nikki and David Goldbeck. New American Library (New York), 1973.

The Taming of the C.A.N.D.Y. Monster, Vicki Lansky. Bantam Books (New York), 1982.

Children's Cookbooks and Books About Food:

Cooking Adventures for Kids, Sharon Cadwallader. San Francisco Book Company/Houghton Mifflin (Boston), 1974.

Food (The Reason Why Series), Irving Adler. The John Day Company (New York), 1977.

Food Sculpture and Decoration for Festive Occasions, Sheila Ostrander. Sterling Publishing Company, Inc. (New York), 1965.

The Natural Snack Cookbook, Jill Pinkwater. Four Winds Press (New York), 1975.

What to Eat and Why, R.V. Fodor. William Morrow and Company (New York), 1979.

CHAPTER 2 WHAT'S INSIDE FOOD?

Activity 10
THAT'S A LOT OF FAT!
See how much fat many people eat each day, and the amounts in some popular foods.

Activity 11
NOW YOU SEE FAT, NOW YOU DON'T
Draw and paint with some fatty foods.

Activity 12
GET ON THE LOW-FAT TRACK
Think of some low-fat alternatives to high-fat foods.

Activity 13
DON'T GIVE YOUR TEETH GRIEF!
See a tooth decay before your very eyes.

Activity 14
SUGAR SHOWDOWN
Spoon out the amounts of sugar in the sweet treats you eat.

Activity 15
NATURE'S CANDY
Appreciate the goodness of naturally sweet fruits.

Activity 16
SALTY SURPRISES
See the amounts of salt some "unsalty" foods contain.

Activity 17
SALT? TASTE IT!
Discover how salt-sensitive you are.

Activity 18
HERBS AND SPICE AND EVERYTHING NICE
Shake on some tasty salt substitutes.

Activity 19
IT'S FINE TO BE UNREFINED
See, feel, and taste the healthfulness of unrefined grains.

Activity 20
FIBER FOCUS
Discover the many sources of natural fiber.

Activity 21
WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE!
Sip some "watery" foods and drinks.

What is a vitamin, anyway? Or a protein, carbohydrate, or mineral? These and other nutrients can be pretty elusive to young minds—and even older ones!

And just what are the consequences of eating too much or too little of certain nutrients? This concept, too, means little to a school-aged child, who has trouble making the connection between the food he or she eats today and possible health problems tomorrow.

Fortunately, good nutrition doesn't depend on technical expertise in either of these areas. It begins with the enjoyment of healthful foods (the point of Chapter 1), and it continues with an awareness of food characteristics children can *understand—not by being subjected to complex, scientific facts, but by* experiencing *those facts.*

For example, do Americans eat too much fat? Let's see how much. How much sugar do you pack away in a typical day? Let's measure it out. What do both of these substances do to our bodies? Let's simulate the effects.

Chapter 2 helps children discover important nutrition information for themselves, and have fun at the same time.

ACTIVITY TEN

THAT'S A LOT OF FAT!

Related Subjects

Science, mathematics

Description

How much fat do we eat each day? How much is in some of our favorite foods? What does too much fat do to our bodies? The children see and manipulate dietary fat to find out.

Purpose

To understand what fat is and what it does.

Materials and Resources

Stick of butter
Knife
Vegetable shortening or lard
Measuring spoons (tablespoon and teaspoon)
Pictures or samples of the following foods: hot dog, quarter-pound cheeseburger, french fries, fried chicken breast, cherry pie
Plastic drinking straws
Hairpins or toothpicks

Procedure

1. Show the children one-eighth stick (1 tablespoon) of butter. Explain that this is the amount of fat a body actually requires each day.

2. Ask the children to guess how much fat the average American eats each day. It's about 8 tablespoons (or 24 teaspoons)—the whole stick!

3. Scoop out one tablespocn (3 teaspoons) of vegetable shortening or lard. Explain that this represents the amount of fat in one hot dog.

4. Show the children pictures or samples of some other popular foods—quarter-pound cheeseburger, french fries, fried chicken breast, and a cherry pie—and ask them to guess how much fat they contain.

5. Spoon out the "answers" in front of each food: quarter-pound cheeseburger—1⅔ tablespoons (5 teaspoons); french fries—1 tablespoon (3 teaspoons); fried chicken breast—1⅓ tablespoons (4 teaspoons); cherry pie—1 tablespoon (3 teaspoons).

6. What's wrong with fatty foods? If we eat a lot of them, we get more fat than we need. A fast-food dinner of a quarter-pound cheeseburger, french fries, and a cherry pie, for example, gives us 3⅔ tablespoons (or 11 teaspoons) of fat. Show the children how much butter this would be; or, spoon out the shortening representing the fat in these three foods.

7. This amount of fat adds a lot of calories to our diets and contributes to obesity. Many scientists also believe too much fat promotes cancer. And, if we eat a lot of

these foods over a long period of time, fatty deposits can build up in our arteries (the blood vessels that supply blood to the heart). This narrows the arteries and makes it harder and harder for our blood to get through. This can eventually cause a heart attack. (A "heart attack" is damage to the heart muscle. The damage occurs when the coronary arteries are blocked and fail to let enough oxygen get to the heart.)

Reassure the children that diet is but one of several risk factors for heart disease, cancer, and other serious illnesses.

8. Have the children make a fist and look at the inside of their wrist to see the blood vessels there (this will be easier to see on thinner, fairer-skinned children). Though some of our arteries are larger than those we can see, none are large enough to work well if they get clogged with fat.

9. Distribute plastic drinking straws and hairpins or toothpicks. Tell the children to imagine that these straws are arteries. Using the hairpins or toothpicks, the children should push shortening into the straws to simulate fat in the arteries.

10. Which straw would be easier to drink from—a normal one, or one clogged with fat? Why? (Testing this question is not recommended; it could result in a mouthful of fat!)

Older Kids Can Also . . .

—Invite a cardiologist, internist, or other health professional to discuss the causes and prevention of heart disease.

—After learning more about the relationship between dietary fat and heart disease, stage a "Heart to Heart" show, where one child portrays a healthy heart and another portrays one in danger of heart disease. The "hearts" talk to each other (about how they stayed healthy or got sick) and take questions from the audience (the other children). Sample questions: What do you eat? What does it do to you? What is the secret to staying healthy?

NOW YOU SEE FAT, NOW YOU DON'T

ACTIVITY ELEVEN

Related Subjects

Science

Description

The children "draw" and "paint" with fatty and non-fatty foods to see which leave a shiny, greasy mark on paper.

Purpose

To learn that not all fatty foods are obviously fatty.

Materials and Resources

Samples of fatty foods: cooked hamburger, cooked bacon, luncheon meat, hot dog, hard cheese, cream cheese, cream, hard-boiled egg yolk, avocado, coconut, snack chips, french fries, peanut butter, chocolate, pastry, doughnut, cookie, mayonnaise, salad dressing, butter, margarine, salad oil, whole milk, etc.

Samples of non-fatty foods: fresh fruits and vegetables (except avocado and coconut), angelfood cake, cooked beans, bread, cooked macaroni, skim milk, cooked rice, etc. (See list in Activity 12, page 25, for more ideas.)

Water

Brown paper lunchbags (uncoated)

Scissors

Napkins

Paintbrushes

Pens, pencils, or crayons

Procedure

1. Ask the children how to tell whether a food has a lot of fat. Can you do it just by looking at a food? How do fatty foods feel? How do they taste? Why is it important to know? Explain that high-fat foods are usually high-calorie foods, and so too many

in our diet can lead to obesity. Overconsumption of high-fat foods also is linked to heart disease and cancer.

2. With the assistance of the children and their families, collect samples of some or all of the foods listed in the "Materials and Resources" section. Do not tell the children which of the foods are fatty.

3. Assemble all the foods. Let them come to room temperature so the fats will soften.

4. Each child should cut the bottom off a brown paper lunchbag and make one lengthwise cut so the bags can be spread out flat, like pieces of paper.

5. Tell the children to prepare to be "fat detectives." Some of the assembled foods are fatty; some are not. It is up to the children to find all the fatty ones.

6. Have the children hold up their papers to the light. Can they see through them, or can they see only indistinct shadows?

7. The children test the foods by rubbing them on the bags and observing the marks they leave. Some foods can be rubbed directly into the paper with fingers or napkins. Other foods may need to be mashed, crumbled, or "painted" on with a paintbrush.

Let the children choose their own foods from the collection and experiment for themselves. Do tell them, though, that the test will work best if they thoroughly rub the foods into the paper.

8. Along with their chosen foods, each child also should put a water spot somewhere on their paper.

9. Tell the children to use a pen, pencil, or crayon to circle each test area and to write the name of the item they rubbed there.

10. After the marks have completely dried, have the children examine them closely. What happened to the water marks? What about the marks of fresh fruits and vegetables (except avocado and coconut), beans, bread, rice, macaroni, angelfood cake, and skim milk? Tell the children to hold their papers up to the light and put their hands behind these spots. Do these areas look any different than the untreated paper?

11. Tell the children to look at and describe the marks the other foods left behind. What happens when these areas are held up to the light?

12. Discuss the results. Are the children surprised at the fat content of certain foods? Should they be concerned if they eat a lot of fatty foods? Why?

GET ON THE LOW-FAT TRACK

ACTIVITY TWELVE

Related Subjects

Language arts

Description

Using a handout that names some high-fat foods, the children think of low-fat substitutes that will get their diets on the "low-fat track." A low-fat recipe is included.

Purpose

To increase awareness of low-fat alternatives to high-fat foods.

Materials and Resources

"Get on the Low-Fat Track" handout
Pencils
Ingredients and equipment for recipe included with this activity (optional)

Procedure

1. Distribute copies of the "Get on the Low-Fat Track" handout. Explain that the words that appear "off the track" are the names of some fatty foods. The children's goal is to get their diet "on track" by writing the name of one low-fat alternative between the railroad ties next to each high-fat food.

2. Some names of low-fat foods appear at the bottom of the handout. Encourage the children to think of other good choices. Here are some more:

Apples, Apple butter, Apple juice, Applesauce
Apricots
Asparagus
Banana
Barley
Beans, except soybeans
Bean sprouts
Beets
Berries
Broccoli
Bulgar
Buttermilk
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Cherries
Chestnuts
Chickpeas
Cocoa made from skim milk
Cod fish
Collard greens
Corn
Crab
Cranberries, Cranberry juice
Cucumbers
Dates
Egg whites
Eggplant
Figs
Grapefruit, Grapefruit juice
Greens
Lettuce
Lobster
Lychee nuts
Mangos
Melons
Milk, 1 percent fat or skim
Mushrooms
Nectarines
Noodles
Oatmeal
Onions
Oranges, Orange juice
Papaya
Peaches
Pears
Peas
Peppers
Pineapple
Plantains
Plums
Prunes
Pumpkin
Radishes
Raisins
Rice
Rolls
Sherbet
Spaghetti
Squash
Sweet potatoes
Tangerines
Tomatoes, Tomato juice
Tuna, water-packed
Turkey, light meat, no skin
Turnips
Wheat cereal

3. Discuss the children's answers: What did they choose? How easy is it to get on the low-fat track? Will anyone change any of their eating habits as a result of this activity? If so, why and how? If not, why not?

LOW-FAT RAILROAD TRACKS

Equipment

Knives
Cutting board
Large tray or long piece of aluminum foil spread on a flat surface

Ingredients

Carrots, celery, bell peppers, zucchini, and any other vegetables that can be cut into strips
Bread sticks

Directions

Cut the vegetables into strips approximately 2 inches long.

On the tray or aluminum foil, arrange the strips like railroad ties, so that they are parallel to one another but not touching.

Line up the bread stick "tracks" end to end, perpendicular to the vegetables.

Serve with curried yogurt dip (stir ¾ tablespoon curry powder into 1 cup of nonfat plain yogurt; chill).

Older Kids Can Also . . .

–Choose one high-fat food and learn its calorie and fat content. The goal is to make a list of the low-fat, low-calorie foods you would have to eat in order to consume the calories and fat in the one high-fat food. Who can make the longest list?

ACTIVITY THIRTEEN

DON'T GIVE YOUR TEETH GRIEF!

Related Subjects
Science

Description
Have a sweet tooth? You may also have a decayed tooth—or, more likely, teeth. The children conduct a simple experiment to see for themselves how soft drinks affect teeth.

Purpose
To understand how sweets cause cavities.

Materials and Resources
Discarded tooth (obtained from the children, dentist, or dental surgeon)
Cola soft drink
Drinking glass
Dentist or dental hygienist (optional)

Procedure
1. Well in advance of the day you plan to schedule this activity, ask the children to be on the lookout for discarded teeth. Perhaps you can encourage a local dentist or dental surgeon to contribute one.

2. Ask the children if they have ever had a cavity. Do they know how they got it? How did the dentist fix it? Why did the dentist fix it?

3. Tell the children they are going to see for themselves how teeth decay.

4. Invite a dentist or dental hygienist to explain the process and prevention of tooth decay. Or, tell the children the following facts:
—Tooth decay can be very painful. If left untreated, it can kill the soft tissue that lives inside the infected tooth.
—Tooth decay is treatable. You can get a cavity filled, or, if the infection has reached the inner tissue, you can get root-canal treatment to remove it and clean the tooth.
—But the best thing to do is to prevent tooth decay in the first place. One important way is cutting down on sugary treats—especially those that stick to your teeth, like caramels or dried fruits.
—All of us have bacteria in our mouths (bacteria are tiny organisms that live almost everywhere; most are harmless).
—Some bacteria love sugar: When you eat it, so do they. The more often you eat sugar, the stickier it is; and the longer it stays in your mouth, the happier those bacteria will be. They break down the sugar into powerful acid, which eats away the outer layer of calcium that protects your teeth.
—First, the acid makes a tiny hole, or cavity, in this layer, known as the enamel. Then the acid digs deeper and deeper until it attacks the sensitive pulp inside and eventually causes infection.
—Besides steering clear of sweets, brush with fluoridated toothpaste, floss your teeth—especially after eating—and visit your dentist often.

5. What exactly happens when we eat sweets? Submerge the tooth in a glass of cola. Tell the children to observe what happens to the tooth. How long does it take? Why did it happen?

Explanation: Acid is the "bad guy" in tooth decay. In most cases, it's made when sugar combines with the bacteria in our mouths. When we drink cola, though, the acid is ready-made and powerful (cola syrup contains phosphoric acid, a potent dissolver of enamel). So, colas—which, along with acid also contain sugar that can help make acid—are a double-bad whammy for our teeth.

6. Explain that cola drinks do the most damage if we drink them before going to sleep and fail to brush our teeth. The same goes for other sugary foods. Some children also hold soft drinks in their mouths before swallowing them.

ACTIVITY FOURTEEN

SUGAR SHOWDOWN

Related Subjects
Mathematics

Description
If we always ate our sugar by the teaspoon, it would be easy to keep track of. But most of us also consume it in the form of soft drinks, baked goods, and other sweet treats. This activity can help children see for themselves how much added sugar hides in the nooks and crannies of these foods. A handout lists the sugar content of some popular foods.

Purpose
To see firsthand the sugar content of various foods. Also, to increase awareness of individual sugar consumption and the problems it can create.

Materials and Resources
"How Sweet Is It?" handout
1 1-pound bag of sugar
Measuring spoons
1 or 2 medium-size transparent bowls

Procedure
1. Enough sugar is added to foods or sold at grocery stores in this country to provide about 125 pounds of the sweet stuff per person each year. Using your own weight as an example, or the combined weight of a few of the children, illustrate how heavy a load this is.

2. Tell the children that most of the added sugar in the American diet comes from soft drinks, table sugar, jams, jellies, syrups, gelatin desserts, and baked goods. (Twenty-five percent of the sugar comes from soft drinks; another 18 percent from such sweets as table sugar, jams, syrups, gelatin desserts, and the like; 13 percent from baked goods; 10 percent from ice cream and other dairy foods; 5 percent from breakfast cereals; and 2 percent from candy. The remaining 27 percent is found in bread, grain products, and other foods.)

3. Fruit and some milk products contain naturally occurring sugars, and that's fine. The sugars in fruit and milk always have something else going for them, like vitamins, minerals, or fiber. Dried fruit, though, is sticky and conducive to tooth decay.

4. Tell the children that it's the added sugars we need to watch out for. They have nothing to offer but calories, and so they make us feel full and crowd out other, more nutritious foods from our diets. Or, if we eat a lot of sugary foods along with more nutritious foods, we add extra calories—and usually, extra weight. And of course, there's the problem of tooth decay (see Activity 13).

5. Have the children keep a record of all the sweet foods, dairy products, and condiments they eat in one day. Tell them to be sure to keep track of the amounts they consume.

6. Distribute copies of the "How Sweet Is It?" handout. The handout includes the approximate sugar content (in teaspoons) of single servings of various popular foods. Tell the children that many processed fruits and some processed vegetables also contain added sugar.

7. Tell the children to look for their foods on the handout and to record the approximate number of teaspoons of sugar each contains. If particular foods are not listed, help the children choose selections that most resemble these foods.

8. When they have completed Step 7, ask the children to tally the total teaspoonsful they ate during the day.

9. One at a time, have each child spoon out his or her total into a clear glass or plastic bowl. Ask the children to count each teaspoon aloud. Record, or ask a child to record, the total teaspoons for each child.

10. If at any time the 1-pound bag of sugar is used up, pour the sugar back into the bag or into another bowl, and start anew with the next child.

11. When all the children have taken a turn, have them calculate the approximate teaspoonsful of sugar the group consumed. How much sugar did this amount to?

Older Kids Can Also...

–Determine the average daily sugar consumption for each child in the group. (Divide the total number of teaspoons by the number of children.) How many children consumed more than the average? How many consumed less? How does the average child's total compare with the estimated per capita consumption of sugar? (Multiply the total by 365.)

ACTIVITY FIFTEEN
NATURE'S CANDY

Related Subjects

Creative writing

Description

Nature's candy–fruit–is naturally sweet and delicious, and a more nutritious choice than candy. But how often do you see an advertisement for fruit? The children taste some fruit for inspiration and write their own ads.

Purpose

To learn that fruits are more healthful than other sweet treats.

Materials and Resources

Samples of various kinds of fruits
Ingredients and equipment for fruit salad recipe included with this activity (optional)
Paper and pencils

Procedure

1. Ask the children to name their favorite sweet snack or dessert. Why do they like it so much? What does it taste like? What is it made of?

2. Tell the children that sweets (candy, cakes, cookies, pies, sugary cereals, and other sugar-added treats) share something in common with fresh fruits. What is it? Both sweets and fresh fruit have a sweet taste, because of their sugar content.

3. Ask the children what makes these two kinds of sweet treats different. Isn't sugar sugar, after all?

Yes, but take a look at the foods they're in. Processed sweets often contain lots of sugar and fat, and little in the way of vitamins, minerals, starch, and fiber. Sweet fruits, on the other hand, have some sugar, next to no fat, and are excellent sources of vitamins, minerals, starch, and fiber.

Tell the children that candy also costs more per pound than fresh fruit.

4. Have a tasting party of fresh fruits. Make the fruit salad recipe together and share it. Discuss the flavor, texture, and appearance of the various fruits.

5. Ask each child to select one favorite fruit they would like to encourage other children to eat. Have each child write a short advertisement about the food to present orally to the others. As they write their pieces, encourage the children to think about the qualities of the fruit that appeal to them. For example: How does an orange smell when you peel it? Do you like the fuzzy touch of peach skin? Is it fun to slice a banana? How does a strawberry taste? Why is a bunch of cherries more nutritious than a glob of cherry jelly?

Seasonal Sundaes

Equipment
Knife
Cutting board
Bowls
Spoons

Ingredients
Assortment of cut-up fresh fruits—the best of the season
Plain low-fat yogurt
Chopped nuts
Sunflower seeds
Raisins, cut-up dried fruits (not too many—these can stick to teeth, just like sticky candy)

Directions
Assemble any combination of cut-up fresh fruits.

Spoon some yogurt on top.

Top with nuts, seeds, wheat germ, Grape-Nuts cereal, and/or dried fruits.

Older Kids Can Also . . .

—Make audio or video recordings of their ads to present to other children. Or, deliver the messages over a public address or intercom system.

—Work together to create a cookbook of healthful fruit desserts, using parents, friends, magazines, and other cookbooks as resources.

—Monitor candy ads on radio and TV and try to answer the following questions: What attributes of the candy are the companies trying to sell? Does health figure in the messages? Do they mention tooth decay? If health claims are made, are they valid ones? Why or why not?

SALTY SURPRISES

ACTIVITY SIXTEEN

Related Subjects
Mathematics

Description
Salt can sneak up where you least expect it. The children try to guess which foods are "salty surprises" and see the actual amount of salt each contains.

Materials and Resources
"Salty Surprises" handout
Pencils
Measuring spoons
Salt
Dark colored paper

Procedure

1. Explain that salt contains sodium, a mineral that can cause high blood pressure (hypertension). Eating too many high-sodium foods can trigger this dangerous—but controllable—disease that can lead to heart disease, stroke, or kidney problems.

2. Measure out 1 teaspoon salt on a piece of dark colored paper (for contrast). Explain that scientists recommend that children under 12 eat no more than this amount each day to stay healthy.

3. Explain that all foods have some salt; however, only about one-tenth of our salt intake comes from natural foods, such as fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and meats. We cannot avoid natural salt, and it's really nothing to worry about. But some processed foods have a lot of salt—much more than they, or we, need.

4. Tell the children that three-fourths of the salt most people consume comes from eating processed foods, not from eating natural foods or using the salt shaker at the table.

5. Ask the children to name as many salty foods as they can think of. Do these foods taste salty? If not, how do we know they're salty?

6. Distribute copies of the "Salty Surprises" handout. Go over the name of each food with the children. Tell the children that the handout contains certain salty surprises. The foods may not look or taste salty, but they have a lot of salt or other sodium-containing ingredients. (Processed soups, some of the saltiest foods there are, do not appear on the list because they invariably taste salty.)

7. Tell the children to guess which foods contain a lot of salt or sodium, and to cir-

cle the names. What do these foods have in common? (They are processed.)

8. These are the "salty surprises" on the handout and the approximate amounts of salt they contain:

Tomato juice—¼ teaspoon salt
Pancakes (3)—¼ teaspoon salt
Double cheeseburger—½ teaspoon salt
American cheese—⅓ teaspoon salt
Beefaroni—½ teaspoon salt
Individual apple pie—¼ teaspoon salt

9. Let the children spoon out the amount of salt these foods contain. How do these amounts compare to the amount scientists recommend we eat? What are some ways to avoid a salty diet?

ACTIVITY SEVENTEEN

SALT? TASTE IT!

Related Subjects

Mathematics

Description

Many of us are so accustomed to the taste of salt, we don't even notice it in our foods. This activity lets children test their salt sensitivity.

Purpose

To become more sensitive to the presence of salt in foods and beverages.

Materials and Resources

One drinking glass or cup per child
One spoon or straw per child
8-ounce liquid measuring cup
Measuring spoons
Salt (enough for ½ teaspoon per child)
Clean dark-colored paper (one piece per child) to hold the salt

Procedure

1. Ask the children to describe the taste of salt. Do they like it? What foods have it?

2. Ask the children to guess how much salt they would need to add to a glass of water before it would taste salty.

3. Let them find out for themselves! Each child should measure out one cup of water into a glass or cup and place 1 teaspoon of salt on a clean dark-colored piece of paper (the color contrast will help them see the salt).

4. Tell the children to taste the water and to try to remember its taste throughout the experiment. (Note: The drinking water in certain locales already has a high sodium content, which may or may not be apparent upon tasting.)

5. Have the children taste a few granules of salt and describe the sensation. (The tastebuds that taste salt are on the tips of our tongues.)

6. Tell the children to add a tiny pinch of salt to their water, stir it with a spoon or straw, and taste it. Does the water taste the same? Does it taste at all salty?

7. Let the children continue to experiment at their own pace until they can definitely detect a salty taste in the water. How do they like the taste? Have they ever eaten or drunk anything like it? Would they want to?

8. How much salt was added? The children can determine this by measuring how much remains on the paper and subtracting it from 1 teaspoon. Are they surprised at the amount? Who added the most? Does that person like salt a lot? Who added the least? Does that person dislike salty foods?

HERBS AND SPICE AND EVERYTHING NICE

ACTIVITY EIGHTEEN

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description
Cutting down on salt doesn't have to be mean flavorless foods. In this activity, the children explore and sample various herbs, spices, and flavorings.

Purpose
To become familiar with a variety of alternatives to salt.

Materials and Resources
"Herbs and Spice and Everything Nice" handout
Popcorn (without butter or salt)
Samples of herbs, spices, and flavorings (except salt)
Some suggestions: basil, black pepper, cayenne pepper, chervil, dill, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme, vinegar, chives, curry powder, garlic powder, lemon juice, onion powder
Raw vegetables (cut in bite-size pieces)
Paper plates
Pencils

Procedure
1. Pass around a bowl of unsalted, unbuttered popcorn. Ask the children if they like the taste. If some don't, what would make it taste better–besides butter and salt?

2. Tell the children that there is a whole variety of herbs, spices, and seasonings that are a refreshing and healthful change from salt. (Salt contains sodium. Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure–hypertension–a serious condition that can cause heart and kidney problems and stroke.)

3. Display various herbs, spices, and flavorings, along with the remaining popcorn and some cut-up raw vegetables. Let the children smell the seasonings and sample some on the assembled foods. Encourage creativity; there are no rules when it comes to tastebuds!

4. When the children have finished experimenting, ask them to describe their favorite seasonings. Which were the most delicious on popcorn? What about on carrots, cucumbers, or green peppers? What combinations of seasonings tasted best? On which foods?

5. Distribute copies of the "Herbs and Spice and Everything Nice" handout. Tell the children that there are no right or wrong answers in this exercise. The object is to create some interesting combinations by drawing one or more lines from each herb, spice, and seasoning to one or more foods. There is no limit to the number of times any item is used.

6. Discuss the answers together. Suggest that the children try some of these combinations at home or in brown-bag lunches brought to school.

IT'S FINE TO BE UNREFINED

ACTIVITY NINETEEN

Related Subjects
Science

Description
Refinement may be a valued quality in people, but the more unrefined our diets, the better off we are health-wise! The children experience the differences between unrefined or minimally refined complex carbohydrates (starches) and highly refined ones. A simple bread recipe is included.

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Purpose

To understand the difference between refined and unrefined complex carbohydrates, and to appreciate the value of unrefined complex carbohydrates to healthy diets.

Materials and Resources

Samples of grain products in different stages of processing, including (if available): whole grain wheat stalk (or picture of one), stone-ground whole-wheat flour, bran, raw (untoasted) wheat germ, unbleached white flour, bleached white flour, whole grain cereal, whole-grain bread, white enriched bread, high-fiber processed cereal, low-fiber processed cereal

Magnifying glass

Ingredients and equipment for bread recipe included with this activity (optional)

Procedure

1. Tell the children that foods with natural complex carbohydrates—starches—are among the most healthful foods they can eat. These foods contain a wide variety of vitamins and minerals, as well as fiber; they are low in fat and salt, and they often contain little added sugar. (The same can be said for certain foods with natural simple carbohydrates—sugars—such as fresh fruits.)

2. Ask the children to name some natural carbohydrate foods (potatoes, whole-grain breads, whole-grain cereals, rice, corn, other grains, dried peas and beans, and fresh fruits and vegetables).

3. Explain that many Americans are not eating as many natural carbohydrates as they need to stay healthy. Refined foods—especially those made with refined flour, fats, and sugar—are taking their place. This increases the risk of tooth decay, obesity, heart disease, and some types of cancer.

4. So, the children may need to act in a refined manner at the dinner table, but it's fine to eat unrefined foods! We can learn a lot about the difference between refined and unrefined starches by taking a look at a grain and its products.

5. Let the children look at a picture of a wheat grain or at the grain itself through a magnifying glass. They will see that the wheat has a protective covering, called the bran. This tough shell contains fiber, many B vitamins, and protein.

6. Another part of the grain is harder to see. Situated at the bottom inside of the wheat kernel is the germ. This contains vitamins, minerals, protein, and vegetable oil.

7. The main part of the kernel is the endosperm. It contains most of the wheat's starch and protein, but only modest amounts of vitamins.

8. All of these wheat parts are found in stone-ground whole wheat flour. Have the children feel the flour with their fingers and examine it under a magnifying glass. It feels and looks rough, doesn't it?

9. Refined (unbleached) white flour is white because these hard, brown parts (bran, germ) are missing entirely. Have the children examine and feel the flour. What they can't see or feel are the vital nutrients that are missing: important B vitamins, vitamin E, trace minerals, and fiber. While many refined white flours are labeled "enriched" (which means that several nutrients that were taken away during processing are returned), most of these nutrients rarely make it back.

10. Bleached, refined white flour has even less vitamin E than regular refined white flour. Have the children examine and feel the refined white flour and the bleached, refined white flour. How do they compare?

11. Have the children examine, feel, and taste whole-grain breads and cereals and compare them with more refined breads and cereals. Is it easy to tell which are more highly processed? Which tastes and textures do the children prefer?

12. Let the children make banana bread together or try the recipe at home.

BANANA BREAD

Equipment
Measuring cups
Measuring spoons
Large bowl
Fork for mashing
Mixing spoon
9×5-inch loaf pan
Wooden toothpick

Ingredients
(dry)
2 cups whole wheat flour
¼ cup sunflower seeds, roasted
1 tablespoon baking powder, low-sodium
⅓ cup instant dry milk
(wet)
3 ripe bananas, mashed
2 eggs, beaten
½ cup honey
2 tablespoons oil
⅓ cup water
1 teaspoon vanilla

Directions
Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Measure dry ingredients and mix together in a large bowl.

Add remaining ingredients, and stir until moist.

Pour into a greased 9×5-inch loaf pan.

Bake for one hour, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in the center of the loaf comes out clean.

Remove from pan immediately.

To store, wrap securely in foil or plastic.

ACTIVITY TWENTY

FIBER FOCUS

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description
Fiber-rich foods are nutritious, healthful, filling, and delicious! The children find out why with a worksheet activity and tasting party.

Purpose
To appreciate the importance–and good taste–of high-hiber foods.

Materials and Resources
"Fiber Focus" handout
Pencils
High-fiber foods for tasting party

Procedure

1. Ask the children if they know what dietary fiber is. Ask for examples of fiber-rich foods.

2. Ask the children if they know why fiber is an important part of our diet.

3. Tell the children they will soon know the answers to these questions and more with the "Fiber Focus" worksheet.

4. After the children have completed the worksheet, discuss the fiber information together. Ask the children if they think they might change any of their dietary habits because of what they have learned. Why or why not?

5. Have a tasting party with whole-grain breads, whole-grain cereals, and raw fruits and vegetables to show the children that it's easy–and delicious!–to eat a high-fiber diet.

ACTIVITY TWENTY-ONE

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

Related Subjects
Science

Description
Water is an essential–and major–component of our bodies. The children sample a variety of "watery" foods and beverages and create buttons declaring the importance of this nutrient. Some recipes are included.

Purpose
To appreciate the importance and sources of water in our diet.

Materials and Resources
Raw fruits
Raw vegetables

Food or postal scale
Beverages such as low-fat or skim milk, unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juices, ice water, unsalted club soda, seltzer, various bottled waters
Ingredients for recipes included with this activity (optional)
Drinking glasses or cups
Drinking straws
Cardboard
Tape
Safety pins
Scissors
Arts and crafts supplies

Procedure

1. Ask the children to shake their heads. Do they hear anything? No sloshing? They might be surprised to know that their brains are made mostly of water–75 percent! Of course, the water is part of their brain tissue and isn't just floating around.

2. Tell the children that their muscles also are about three-fourths water, and their blood, almost all water. All in all, the human body is all wet–about two-thirds water.

3. Tell the children that water serves some very important functions:
–It carries nutrients and oxygen to our cells.
–It helps eliminate wastes.
–It helps keep our body tissues from sticking together.
–It helps keep our bodies cool.

4. Liquids aren't the only way to consume water. Many solid foods have a lot of it–especially fresh fruits and vegetables.

5. Choose any fresh fruit or vegetable to demonstrate. The children should weigh the food and record its weight, then let the food dry out for several days and weigh it again. How much less does it weigh? How much water evaporated away?

6. Ask the children to name their favorite beverages. The ones listed in this activity are nutritious (or at least not harmful) choices. Soft drinks and fruit-flavored drinks, on the other hand, have some problems. They contain lots of calories, sugar, sometimes artificial colorings and flavorings, and little else. Even drinks that are fortified with vitamins are no nutritional bargain, because of the other ingredients they contain. And diet drinks have sugar substitutes whose safety is questionable.

7. Tell the children that it's a good idea to drink about six to eight cups of liquid a day to get all the water our bodies need. When it's hot or when we're working or playing hard, it's important to drink even more.

8. Have a tasting party of "watery" foods and beverages.

9. Tell the children to create buttons that inform others about the important role of water in a healthful diet. The buttons may have a funny slogan (such as "You're All Wet!"), a funny picture (a person with water sloshing around inside, for example), or drawings of "watery" foods. The buttons can be made by cutting a circle from cardboard and taping a safety pin to the back.

RECIPES:

Fruit Ticklers–Mix ⅔ parts unsweetened fruit juice with ⅓ part carbonated water. Hang a slice of fresh fruit over the side of the glass.

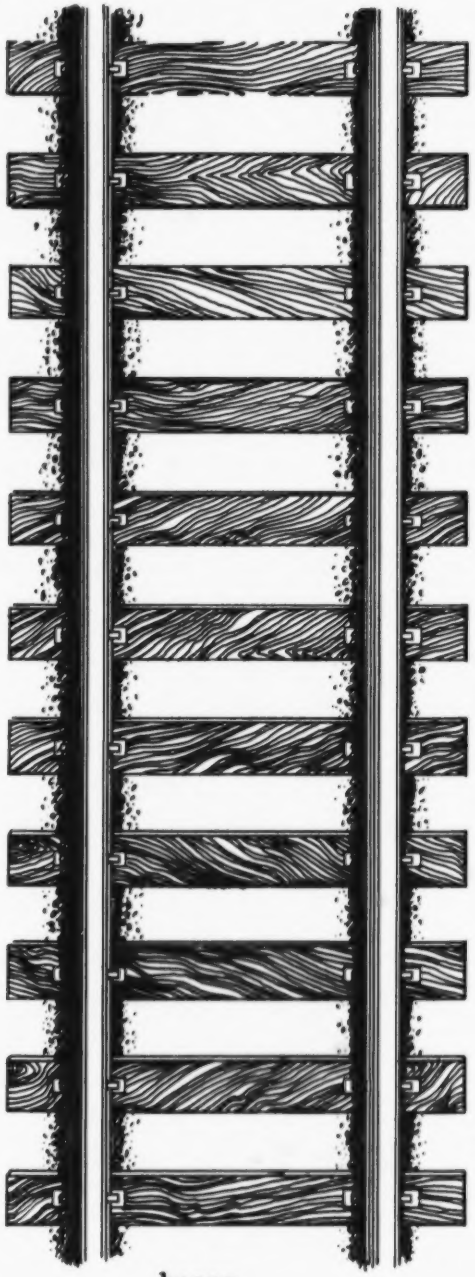
Go Cones–Snow cones (shaved or crushed ice in a paper cone) with concentrated, unsweetened fruit juice instead of syrup.

Melon Punch–Combine one medium cantaloupe, one banana, and the juice of one orange in a blender and puree until smooth. Serve in small glasses with lots of ice. Yield: four servings.
(Reprinted with permission from *The Supermarket Handbook,* Nikki and David Goldbeck (The New American Library), 1976.)

Older Kids Can Also...

–Learn more about water. Modern drinking-water supplies are not always safe and healthful. Write the League of Women Voters Education Fund, 1730 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; and the Environmental Protection Agency, Water Supply Division, Washington, D.C. 20460.

GET ON THE LOW-FAT TRACK



fried chicken

whole milk

doughnut

tuna packed in oil

cheddar cheese

potato chips

ice cream

fatty steak

mayonnaise

bacon

broiled seafood
orange
skim milk
low-fat cottage cheese
Shredded Wheat
angelfood cake

beans
carrots
macaroni
broiled chicken (no skin)
rice

bread
catsup
spaghetti
baked potato
lean meat
low-fat milk

BEVERAGES	TEASPOONS (APPROXIMATE)
Nestle Chocolate Quik (2-3 heaping tsp.)	4½
Kool-Aid, sweetened (8 oz.)	6
Tang (8 oz.)	7½
Soft drinks (12 oz.)	10

BREAKFAST CEREALS (1 oz.)	
Shredded Wheat	0
Puffed Rice	0
Puffed Wheat	0
Nutri-Grain	0
Cheerios	½
Chex cereals	½
Kix	½
Kellogg's Corn Flakes	½
Special K	1
Product 19	1
Rice Crispies	1
Total	1
Wheaties	1
Grape Nuts	1
Life	1
40% Bran Flakes	1
All-Bran	1
Granola	1½
Sweetened cereals	2½

CANDY	TEASPOONS (APPROXIMATE)
Chewing gum (2 sticks)	1
Cough drop (2)	1
Lifesaver (2)	1
Starburst Fruit Chew (1)	1
Bubble Yum (1 piece)	2
Now and Later (1 square)	2
Peanut M&M's (14)	3
Chocolate bar with almonds (1 oz.)	3
Nestle's Crunch (1 oz.)	3
Snickers (1 oz.)	3
Mars Bar (1 oz.)	3
Hershey's Milk Chocolate (1 oz.)	3
Plain M&M's (31)	4
Royals Mint Chocolate (1 oz.)	4
Milky Way (1 oz.)	4
Reese's Peanut Butter Cup (1.6 oz.)	5
Cotton candy (1 cone)	5
Marshmallows (4 large)	5
Jelly beans (10)	7

CONDIMENTS	
Catsup (1 tablespoon)	½
Relish (1 tablespoon)	1
Honey (1 teaspoon)	1
Jam or jelly (½ tablespoon)	1½
Maple syrup (1 tablespoon)	3

CAKES	TEASPOONS (APPROXIMATE)
Crumb coffee cake (2.3 oz.)	3
Cupcake with icing (2½" dia.)	3
Twinkie (1)	5
Cake, no icing (2.3 oz.)	5
Sara Lee Chocolate Cake (3.2 oz.)	8
Strawberry shortcake, whipped cream (3.8 oz.)	8
Yellow cake with icing (3.2 oz.)	9
COOKIES	
Graham crackers (2 large)	1
Most other kinds (1 cookie)	1
DAIRY	
Low-fat chocolate milk (1 cup)	3
Vanilla ice cream (½ cup)	3
Ice cream sandwich (3 oz.)	4
Low-fat flavored yogurt (1 cup)	4
Ice cream soda (10 oz.)	6
Ice cream sundae (1 cup)	10
Thick Shake (11 oz.)	10

DESSERTS AND SNACKS	TEASPOONS (APPROXIMATE)
Danish pastry (2.3 oz.)	1½
Doughnut (1.6 oz.)	2
Eclair with icing (3.5 oz.)	3
Blueberry or Cherry Pop-Tart (1.8 oz.)	3
Chocolate pudding (½ cup)	4
Jello (½ cup)	4
Popsicle (1)	4½
Sherbet (½ cup)	7
PIES	
Fruit pies (4.6 oz.)	4
Coconut custard (4.6 oz.)	4
Chocolate cream (4.6 oz.)	7½
Lemon meringue (4.6 oz.)	8
Pecan (4.6 oz.)	12

SALTY SURPRISES

You can shake a lot of the sodium out of your diet just by cutting down on salty processed foods. But which ones are salty? This list has six salty surprises. Circle them. Then write the names or draw pictures of some foods with less salt.

Tomato juice

Apple juice

Celery

Pancakes (3, from a mix)

Plain spaghetti

Shredded Wheat

Double cheeseburger

American cheese

Skim milk

Beef

Beefaroni

Raisins

Individual apple pie

HERBS AND SPICE AND EVERYTHING NICE

Ginger

Curry

Garlic powder

Basil

Chives

Celery seed

Thyme

Onion

Black pepper

Lemon juice

Dill

Parsley

Oregano

Mint

Sage

Fish

Eggs

Baked potato

Chicken

Green beans

Cottage cheese

Popcorn

Salad

Tomatoes

Noodles

Raw carrots

Lean hamburger

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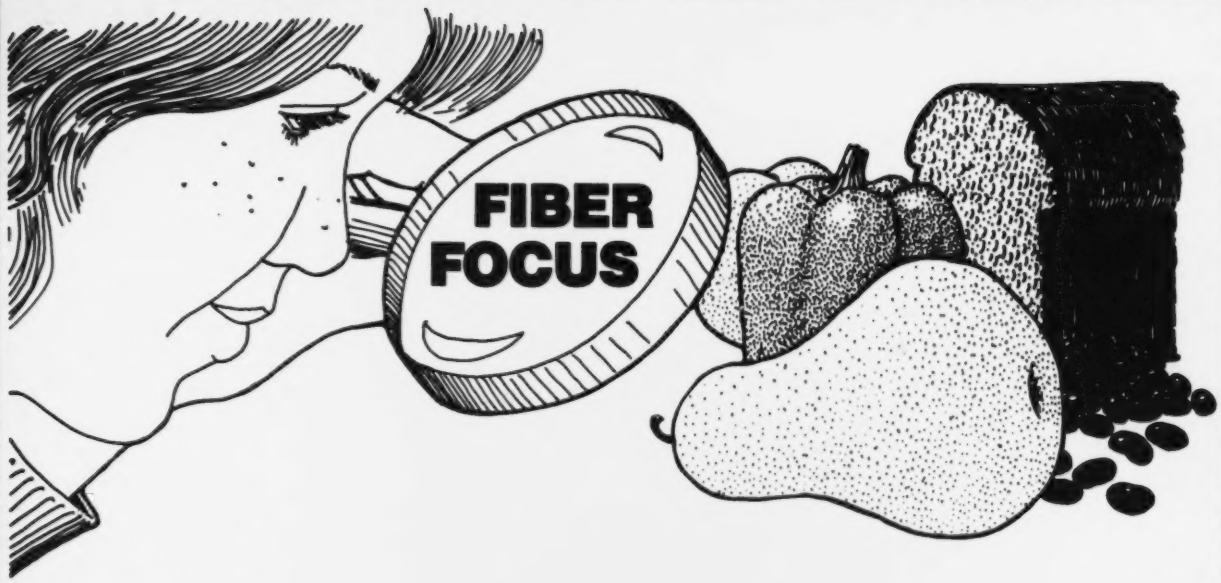


Check the box if the answer is yes.

☐ Did you eat a piece of fresh fruit today?

☐ Did you eat a raw vegetable?

☐ Did you eat whole-grain cereal?

☐ Did you eat whole-grain bread?

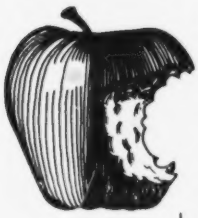
☐ Did you eat some dried peas or beans?

If you checked one or more boxes, congratulations! You had some fiber today.

Fiber is plant material that is not broken down during digestion. It acts like a sponge inside of us–absorbing water and making us feel full.

Fiber helps keep our digestive system free from cancer, constipation, and other diseases; helps keep our calorie intake low; and may help prevent heart disease and control diabetes.

From now on, try to include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain cereals and breads, and dried peas and beans in your diet. They provide plenty of fiber, starch, vitamins, and minerals. They also are generally low in fat, salt, and added sugar.



NIBBLES

Let's Have a Fat Attack!

Most of us—even nutrition know-it-alls—crave some nutrition no-no's now and then. Here's one way to confront some fatty-food cravings and make light of them! Tell the children to think of the greasiest, gloppiest food that appeals to them and to describe or draw the way it would look as a monster movie character.

It's a Bird... It's a Plane... It's a Tooth-Mobile!

The children make "tooth-mobiles" to remind them about good dental health and nutrition: Make a large cardboard tooth or toothy grin; string it from the ceiling with dental floss; and use floss to attach toothbrushes, toothpaste, photographs of tooth-healthy snacks, and so on.

The Natural Starch March

Naturally starchy foods are terrific, so let's tell the world about them! The children make masks and costumes representing their favorite starchy wonders, create picket signs explaining why these foods are so healthful, and then have a "natural starch march" around the school or near a grocery store or shopping center.

Seasonings for All Seasons

Here's a great gift idea for Mother's Day, Father's Day, or any holiday. Mix up this saltless seasoning sensation, pour it into a plastic sandwich bag or glass jar, and tie on a pretty ribbon. Attach a note that lists the ingredients and carries a message like this one: "Roses are red, violets are blue, I left out the salt, because I love you!"

No-Salt Seasoning Mix

1 teaspoon celery seed, ground
2½ teaspoons marjoram, crushed
2½ teaspoons summer savory, crushed
1½ teaspoons thyme, crushed
1½ teaspoons basil, crushed

What is That, Anyway?

The children make a largely artificial and non-nutritious "dessert" with non-nutritive sweeteners, artificial colors, and flavor extracts, mixed with water and flour or cornstarch. What's a fitting name for this concoction? What are some alternative desserts that are more appealing and more delicious?

TAKE-HOME TIPS

Many Americans eat too much fat, sugar, and salt.

_____ [student's name] is learning which foods have them, and which foods have other important nutrients like starch and fiber. Here are some things you can do together:

• Make a list of the family's favorite treats. How many of these fatty, sugary, or salty foods did you name?

Fatty foods–hot dogs, bacon, fatty steaks or burgers, fried chicken, fried fish, french fries, ice cream, butter, whole milk, cheese, buttered popcorn, margarine, potato chips, bologna.

Sugary foods–soft drinks, candy, cake, pies, cookies, many breakfast cereals, dried fruit.

Salty foods–most canned soups, pretzels, ham, frozen dinners and entrees, many canned vegetables, many other processed foods–even ones that don't taste salty.

For each one, vow to substitute a healthier food, like fresh fruit and vegetables, skim milk, whole grain breads and cereals, dried peas and beans, and lean meat, poultry, and fish.

• Here are some ways to enjoy the goodness of starch and fiber:

–Visit a bakery and ask which breads are made with whole grains. Choose the prettiest and have a curb-side picnic together.

–Bake a good old-fashioned whole-wheat bread together. Get up to your elbows in dough and enjoy!

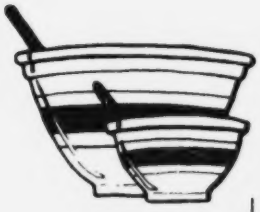
–Have a potato party. Bake white potatoes and top with low-fat cottage cheese and herbs. Bake sweet potatoes and eat them plain. Delicious!

• Holidays are special family days, so treat your loved ones to these good foods instead of fatty, sugary, or salty snacks:

–Instead of candy hearts for Valentine's Day, try some heart-healthy foods like juicy fresh fruit (want to be the "apple" of someone's eye?).

–Easter or May Day call for baskets–but hold the candy! Try fresh herb and vegetable "flowers," fresh fruits, nuts, and bread sticks.

–Christmas, Chanukah, Thanksgiving. . . any time the family is hungry and dinner isn't ready, offer fresh vegetable pick-ups and plain low-fat yogurt mixed with curry powder, or with grated parmesan cheese and basil.



COOK IT TOGETHER

One of the best things about holidays is holiday food. But many have too much fat, sugar, or salt. Try to stretch your imagination next time you look for a special dish for Easter, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, or other holiday fare.

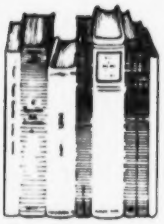
For example, next St. Patrick's Day, instead of bright-green cookies–full of artificial coloring and sugar–serve up these naturally green potatoes, adapted from a recipe in *Laurel's Kitchen* (by Laurel Robertson, Carol Flinders, and Bronwen Godfrey; published by Nilgiri Press, 1976).

GOOD GRACIOUS, THEY'RE GREEN!

Serves 6-12

6 medium potatoes
3 stalks broccoli (or 1 package frozen broccoli)
¼ cup skim milk
½ cup grated cheese
1 tablespoon margarine
¼ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon dill, parsley, or oregano

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Scrub potatoes. Make shallow slits around the middle as if you were going to cut the potatoes lengthwise.
3. Bake until done (about an hour).
4. Peel fresh broccoli stems. Steam the whole stalks until just tender. Chop into fine pieces. (If you use frozen broccoli, steam or cook in a small amount of water until just tender. Chop into fine pieces.)
5. Slice the potatoes in half (using the slits as guides) and scoop the insides into a bowl. Add broccoli, ¼ cup of the cheese, margarine, pepper, garlic powder, milk, and dill, parsley, or oregano. Mash all together until well mixed. Heap into potato jackets and sprinkle with remaining cheese.
6. Return to the oven to heat through (about 10 minutes).



RESOURCES

Write for these free pamphlets:

"Snack Facts," a colorful pamphlet on sugar's effects on teeth, includes ideas for snacks you can really sink your teeth into. Write: National Institute of Dental Research, National Institutes of Health, Building 31, Room 2C35, Bethesda, Md. 20205. (Audience: kids and adults)

"Diet, Nutrition & Cancer Prevention–The Good News" is packed with information, including tips on choosing high-fiber foods and avoiding fatty ones. Write: National Cancer Institute, Office of Cancer Communications, Building 31, Room 10A-18, Bethesda, Md. 20205. (Audience: older kids and adults)

"Cancer Prevention–Good News, Better News, Best News" offers tips for avoiding cancer, including general dietary advice. Write: National Cancer Institute, Office of Cancer Communications, Building 31, Room 10A-18, Bethesda, Md. 20205. (Audience: adults)

For information on the "Dietary Guidelines for Americans" and other government nutrition publications, write to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Human Nutrition Information Service, Room 360, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Also, contact your local chapter of the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, and the American Diabetes Association for information on their publications. And the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colo. 81009, can send you a list of free or inexpensive publications.

FOODS AND YOU

CHAPTER 3

Activity 22
FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Think your own creative thoughts about food.

Activity 23
TRY IT, YOU'LL LIKE IT!
Try some new, healthful tastes.

Activity 24
AIM FOR GOOD NUTRITION
Toss beanbags at some important nutrition messages.

Activity 25
THE JUNK FOOD HALL OF SHAME
Take a lighthearted look at some heavy-handed foods.

Activity 26
GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR SNACKS
Crunchy, melt-in-your-mouth, and chewy snacks come in healthful versions, too!

Activity 27
YOUR PERSONAL BEST
See how your favorite foods stack up nutritionally.

Activity 28
HAVE AN ACTIVE DAY!
Build healthful exercise and movement into each day.

Activity 29
GOOD FOOD WANTED
Want to eat good foods? Recruit them with want ads!

Activity 30
YOUR EATING GUIDE
Learn which foods should be eaten anytime, sometimes, or now and then.

Activity 31
MAKE A GAME OF GOOD HEALTH
Sort through some useful and not-so-useful health advice.

No matter who's with us at the dinner table, eating becomes a strictly personal experience once food touches our lips. The way we taste a food and savor it, and the way our body digests the food and uses it, is something all our own.

The activities in this chapter can help children make the important connection between healthful eating and healthful living—not for others, but for themselves. After all, whose body is it, anyway?

Of course, eating isn't all there is to good health. The best diets in the world won't make our children healthy if the other puzzle pieces aren't in place. This chapter incorporates some of the most important ones.

Fitness, for instance. According to a report released in 1986 by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Health and the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, kids don't get enough exercise. But they need it—for weight control (obesity is the major food-related problem for American children), healthy hearts, strong bones, sound sleep, peace of mind, and other health-promoting benefits.

Good health also means saying "no" to drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes. Because children are never too young to learn about these health-hurters, we've included an activity to help them do just that.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

ACTIVITY TWENTY-TWO

Related Subjects

Creative writing, language arts, art, music

Description

Lots of our waking hours are spent thinking about food. Here's an activity that channels those thoughts into creative outlets: writing, drawing, collecting, composing, whatever!

Purpose

To make foods and eating personally meaningful.

Materials

One empty box (shoebox size or larger) per child
Paper
Writing and drawing materials
Arts and crafts supplies
Magazines with photographs of food

Procedure

1. Ask each child to think of one very personal experience with or reaction to food—for example, a favorite food or a happy memory associated with food.

2. Ask for volunteers to share their thoughts; however, emphasize that this isn't a requirement—these are personal reflections.

3. Explain that each child will make a special "Food for Thought" box to hold his or her thoughts about food. The children may decorate their boxes, add to them whenever they like, and either keep the contents private or share them with you or with the other children.

4. What should go into the boxes? Suggest these and other ideas:
—Collect drawings or photos of your favorite foods.
—Collect favorite recipes.
—Collect interesting articles about food.
—Collect different shapes of pasta or different colored dried beans.
—Collect non-perishable foods from the wild (acorns, dried berries, nuts, etc.).
—Collect or create food cartoons.
—Collect interesting, attractive, or informative food labels.
—Collect coupons for healthful foods for your family to use at the grocery store.
—When you have an interesting thought or question about food, write it down.
—Write poems, stories, or songs about food.
—Keep a checklist of the fruits, vegetables, and other good-for-you foods you eat.
—Keep a running list of new foods you've tried or would like to try.
—Make a list of your favorite restaurants.

–Make miniature food replicas from arts and crafts materials.
–Make musical instruments from foods (for example, rattles made from beans and empty juice cans).
–Use your imagination!

5. Make room in your classroom schedule to accommodate those who wish to share their treasures. You might also want to use these projects as a starting point for a "Food for Thought" bulletin board or learning center. Stock with some thought-provoking items, including the following:
–a list of suggested activities;
–food-related games and puzzles;
–a magnifying glass for taking a closer look at foods;
–empty packages for learning about labeling;
–samples of healthful foods;
–library books about food;
–a record player and records of songs about food; and
–fish or other class pets to feed.

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description
Given certain clues, the children name all the healthful foods they can think of, then choose the ones they would like to try. These and other wholesome treats are sampled at a tasting party.

Purpose
To increase awareness of the wide range of healthful food choices.

Materials and Resources
Chart or chalkboard
Pen or chalk
Notes to send to parents
Healthful foods brought from home

Procedure

1. Tell the children they will play a game where the object is to name as many healthful foods as they can. Explain that you will give them clues–some to make the game easier, and others to make it more challenging.

How will you know if the children's answers are healthful foods? They most likely will be if they are:
–low in fat
–low in salt
–low in added sugar
–high in starch or dietary fiber

2. These are some clues of the "easy" variety; you might want to add others.
Name a food that is:
–white, wet, cold, and low in fat (skim or low-fat milk)
–brown on the outside, orange on the inside, usually served hot, but also good cold (baked sweet potato)
–brown and squarish (whole wheat bread)
–small, red, and hard before cooking (dried kidney beans)
–soft, white, and lumpy (cottage cheese)

3. Write the children's answers on a chart or chalkboard. Even if answers are incorrect, record them if they are healthful food choices. Encourage the children to offer additional names of healthful foods.

4. If the children name foods that are obviously unhealthful, refer back to the factors in Step 1 to explain why.

5. Here are some less specific and more challenging clues:
Name foods that are–

–purple	–very small
–yellow	–crunchy
–white	–soft
–red	–wet
–dark green	–dry
–light green	–sweet
–brown	–sour
–very large	

Also, name a food that –
–begins with the same letter as your first name

–begins with the same letter as your last name
Let the children think of some of their own clues to present, too.

6. When the list includes a wide variety of healthful foods, have each child secretly choose three–either favorites or unfamiliar ones.

7. Give each child a form letter that says something like the following: "Today the children learned about healthful food choices. On _____ [date], we will have a tasting party, where everyone will get to try some new or unusual foods from a list we made together. Your child made three choices: _____, _____, and _____. If you would like to participate, please select one of these foods and send just enough for _____ [number] children to have a taste."

8. Have the children fill in their choices. You might want to review them to ensure they're affordable and practical. Since it's a rare class where every child has parents or guardians who are willing and able to participate, make it clear that it's not essential that every child brings some food.

9. Have a tasting party!

AIM FOR GOOD NUTRITION

ACTIVITY TWENTY-FOUR

Related Subjects
Fitness, art

Description
The children earn points by dunking beanbags into targets that describe three nutrition "no-no's" and one "yes! yes!"

Purpose
To reinforce the concepts of fatty, salty, and sugary foods.

Materials and Resources
Targets: four shoeboxes or larger boxes
Paper, crayons, scissors, and other art supplies
Magazines that contain photographs of food
Several ping-pong balls, sponge balls, or beanbags (Here's a fast and easy way to make sturdy beanbags: For each one, use about ½ cup dried beans or peas and three plastic sandwich-size bags. Put the beans in one bag, squeeze out the air, fold the top over, tape it shut, and place the bag in a second bag. Squeeze air out of the second bag and place it in the third bag. Squeeze out the air again and tie the packet securely with a ribbon.)

Procedure
1. Explain that good nutrition is something to aim for, because it can help the children grow up healthier. Besides, it tastes delicious!

2. Explain that learning about good nutrition doesn't have to be complicated. Just knowing three things can help you have a better diet:
–eat fewer fatty foods
–eat fewer salty foods
–eat fewer sugary foods

3. Discuss each of these recommendations. Some sample discussion facts and questions follow.

Eat fewer fatty foods: What are some fatty foods you eat every day? Butter, margarine, and whole milk are fatty; so are french fries, fried chicken, ice cream, and doughnuts. What other foods have a lot of fat?

Too much fat can increase the risk of heart disease, cancer, and obesity.

Eat fewer salty foods: Do you know that most–about three-fourths–of the salt you eat comes from processed foods (foods made in a factory)? Name some processed foods. Canned soup, packaged macaroni and cheese, and frozen pizza are processed foods, and they have a lot of salt! So does chocolate pudding mix, even though it's

sweet. If you eat at a fast food restaurant, watch out–most things there, from burgers to shakes, have a load of salt inside.

Most people eat more salt than they need. Too much salt is one factor that can increase the risk of high blood pressure, a serious and dangerous condition that promotes heart disease and stroke.

Eat fewer sugary foods: Fruits have natural sugar, and that's fine, because they have other important nutrients. It's the added white sugar you have to cut down. What sugary foods do you eat or know about? Everyone can name soft drinks and hundreds of sweet desserts, but don't forget about sugary breakfast cereals and toaster pastries.

Too much sugar can lead to tooth decay or obesity. It can also fill you up with "empty" calories that take the place of nutrient-packed ones in your diet.

A fourth recommendation, which is not reinforced in this game, is equally important:

Eat more high-fiber and starchy foods–Foods that are naturally high in fiber or starch are generally low in fat, salt, and added sugar. Name some foods that are rich in these nutrients. Hint: The delicious categories are: fruits, vegetables, whole grain cereals and breads, and dried peas and beans. A diet low in fiber and starch is usually one with a lot of processed foods.

High-fiber foods are important to healthy digestion and may decrease the risk of developing cancer of the colon. Naturally starchy foods are low in fat and contain many essential nutrients.

4. Have the children decorate the boxes to make four targets. One will symbolize fatty foods (perhaps a drawing of a stick of butter and a slogan such as "Fight the Fat" would get this meaning across). Another will symbolize salty foods (how about a salt shaker and "Shake the Salt Habit"?). A third target will symbolize sugary foods (a candy bar and "Shoo Away Sugar"?). And the fourth will symbolize foods that are just right–healthful foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain breads, and so on, which are neither too fatty, too salty, nor too sweet.

5. Game time! As each child steps up to a designated point with a ball or a beanbag, call out the name of a food. The child should say the name of, and aim for, the right category. For example, you say "french fries;" the child says "too fatty" or "too salty" (or the appropriate slogan written on one of these targets) and makes a toss. The child gets one point for calling the right category and one bonus point for getting the ball or bag inside.

Here are some foods that fall under the four categories. You may want to use familiar brand names or food types to make these examples go further:

Too fatty
French fries (may also be too salty)
Double cheeseburger
Bacon (also too salty)
Doughnut (may also be too sugary)
Buttered popcorn (may also be too salty)
Whole milk

Too salty
Hot dogs (also too fatty)
Pickles
Canned soups
Frozen dinners (may also be too fatty)
Canned macaroni and cheese
Cheese (also too fatty)

Too sugary (many sugary foods often are also too fatty)
Ice cream (also fatty)
Candy bar (usually fatty)
Cake with icing
Pie (usually fatty)
Pre-sweetend drink mixes
Many breakfast cereals

Just right
Fresh fruits
Fresh vegetables
Whole-grain breads
Lean meats
Poultry (without the skin)
Seafood
Low-fat or skim milk
Beans

THE JUNK FOOD HALL OF SHAME

ACTIVITY TWENTY-FIVE

Related Subjects
Creative writing, art

Description
Where do "junk foods" belong? In the Junk Food Hall of Shame! Where do "junk food junkies" belong? You guessed it! The children create a display of infamous and unhealthful foods, then name, draw, and describe the habits of some imaginary Hall of Shamers. A recipe for a "junk food" substitute is included.

Purpose
To take a lighthearted look at some heavy-handed foods.

Materials and Resources
Packages, labels, magazine photos, and drawings of junk foods
Arts and crafts materials
Ingredients and equipment for recipe included with this activity (optional)

Procedure
1. Ask the children to name all the "junk foods" they can think of.

2. Discuss some characteristics these foods share (they have a lot of calories; they aren't very nutritious; they have too much fat, salt, and sugar).

3. Explain that the group is going to create a "Junk Food Hall of Shame." As space and creativity permit, this can be anything from a bulletin board to a full-scale exhibit. The children should contribute junk food packages (empty or full), food labels, photos from magazines, drawings, and anything else (including signs and slogans) that conveys the theme. Allow sufficient time (a week, at least) to assemble the best possible collection.

4. The next step is to add some imaginary Hall of Shamers. Tell the children to think of some funny names for "junk food junkies" (for example, Greasy Gus, Snack Food Sue, or Potato Chip Pete). The characters will be featured on posters that include portraits of them eating their favorite foods and descriptions of the eating habits that got them into the Junk Food Hall of Shame.

5. Arrange the posters and the junk food display. Does anyone think they have anything in common with the Hall of Shamers? What are some good ways to get out of the Hall of Shame?

6. After the children learn some more about nutrition, you may want to follow up with Activity 56, "Join the Healthful Food Hall of Fame."

HOCUS POCUS PUDDING

This simple recipe was adapted from "Instant Cottage Cheese Pudding" in *Diet for a Small Planet*, by Frances Moore Lappé, published by Ballantine Books, 1971.

Equipment
Bowl
Spoon
Knife
Cutting board

Ingredients
Low-fat cottage cheese
Unsweetened apple butter or applesauce, raisins, or chopped apples
Cinnamon

Directions
Mix up any combination of the above for a naturally sweet "pudding."

GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR SNACKS

ACTIVITY TWENTY-SIX

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description

Taste is only part of the reason we like snacks; texture is another. The children sample various kinds of healthful snack foods and share their reactions to them.

Purpose

To appreciate the role texture plays in our enjoyment of snacks.

Materials and Resources

Samples of crunchy snacks: carrots, celery, apples, bread sticks, crackers (those without too much fat or salt)

Samples of melt-in-your-mouth snacks: low-fat yogurt, yogurt and fruit shakes, frozen fruit bars (no sugar added), low-fat cottage cheese

Samples of chewy snacks: bagels; raisins and other unsweetened, dried fruit (but watch out for these—they can stick to teeth and cause cavities)

Napkins and appropriate implements

Paper and pencils

Procedure

1. Explain that the children are going to discuss, experiment with, and write about three food textures: crunchy, melt-in-your-mouth, and chewy.

2. Ask the children to name some "junk food" snacks that have these textures (crunchy: potato chips and other snack chips and crackers with a lot of fat and sodium; melt-in-your-mouth: ice cream, chocolate, "shakes," gooey desserts; chewy: caramel candy, salt water taffy, bubble gum).

3. Questions for discussion: What makes people crave certain textures? When do you want to eat something crunchy? When do you want to eat something that melts in your mouth? When are you in the mood for something chewy? Does weather have anything to do with your texture preference? What about your mood, the time of day, or how you're spending your time?

4. Ask the children to name some healthful snacks that are crunchy, melt-in-your-mouth, or chewy (see Materials and Resources for ideas). Let them try some out.

5. Ask the children to think about their favorite snack textures. Why do they like these textures? How do they feel? How do they sound? What healthful foods have these textures? What "junk foods" have them? Which foods do the children prefer? When do they like to eat them? Does it have anything to do with the weather, their mood, the time of day, or how they're spending their time?

What would yogurt taste like if it were crunchy? If crackers weren't crunchy, would they be as much fun to eat? Ask the children to think of some other examples of snack texture switch-ups.

YOUR PERSONAL BEST

ACTIVITY TWENTY-SEVEN

Related Subjects

Language arts

Description

Athletes strive for their personal best in sports, but anyone can do the same with nutrition. The children choose 10 of their favorite foods and learn how they rate as healthful food choices.

Purpose

To increase awareness of personal food favorites and see how they contribute to a healthful diet.

Materials and Resources

"Your Personal Best" handout

Paper and pencils

Procedure

1. Ask the children to list on a piece of paper 20 foods they usually eat.

2. Use the following as a basis for discussion:

—Name a sugary food on your list.

—Name a naturally sweet food on your list.

–Name a fatty food on your list.
–Name a salty food on your list.
–Name a homemade food on your list.
–Name a processed food on your list.

3. Distribute copies of the "Your Personal Best" handout. Explain that some foods are much better than others for good health and long lives. Tell the children that athletes strive to do their "personal best"–the best they can do as individuals–in sports. This activity will help the children see if they are doing their personal best in nutrition.

4. Tell the children to read and answer each of the five questions on the handout.

5. Have the children score their papers as follows:
–If they answered "yes" to five questions, they are doing their "personal best" in nutrition.
–If they answered "yes" to four questions, they are close to their "personal best."
–Three "yes" answers means they are in the home stretch.
–Two "yes" answers means they have some catching up to do.
–One "yes" answer means they are falling way behind.
–No "yes" answers means they ought to start the race all over again!

6. Discuss some ways the children can improve their diets.

ACTIVITY TWENTY-EIGHT

HAVE AN ACTIVE DAY!

Related Subjects
Fitness, language arts

Description
There are lots of good reasons to exercise–weight control, muscle tone, heart health, longevity, fun–but how many of us say we simply don't have the time? This handout suggests ways to make that time, and to make it fun.

Purpose
To learn how to build healthful exercise and movement into each day.

Materials and Resources
"Have an Active Day!" handout
"Have Seven Active Days!" handout
Pencils

Procedure
1. Ask the children to name their favorite physical activities. How often do they engage in these activities?

2. Why is physical activity important? Even with the healthiest diets, we wouldn't be completely healthy without activity:
–It helps us reach or maintain a desirable weight.
–It helps us avoid heart disease.
–It strengthens our bones, which helps us avoid osteoporosis, "brittle bone disease."
–It helps us get a good night's sleep.
–It helps us feel more energetic.
–And, it helps us feel good–about the day and about ourselves!

3. Explain that sports and games are important ways to keep fit, but not the only ways. It's possible to build healthful exercise and movement into each day, no matter what we're doing!

4. Distribute copies of the two handouts. The first lists 25 active ideas other than sports and games; the second is a chart for scheduling these ideas into one week.

5. Let the children work together to complete "Have Seven Active Days!" Questions for discussion: What are some other active ideas? How can you be more active at school? At home?

GOOD FOOD WANTED

ACTIVITY TWENTY-NINE

Related Subjects
Creative writing

Description
The children write "want ads" for healthful foods.

Purpose
To review the wide range of healthful foods.

Materials and Resources
Newspaper "help wanted" sections
Paper and pencils

Procedure
1. Ask the children if they have ever seen a "help wanted" ad. Where are they found? Who reads them? What are they for?

2. Distribute copies of newspaper "help wanted" sections.

3. Ask the children to find good examples of the ads—those that include a lot of details about the positions they're advertising. Have the children read the examples aloud.

4. Tell the children to imagine that they are the employers, and that they want to advertise for some healthful foods. (The children will have to assume that the foods can read and respond to the ads!)

5. Ask the children to name some healthful foods (fruits, vegetables, legumes, lean meats, poultry, fish, whole-grain breads and cereals, low-fat dairy products, and so on).

6. Tell the children that each should choose one specific healthful food (such as an orange or a glass of skim milk) and write a descriptive "good food wanted" ad about the food without naming it. (Example: "Wanted—long, yellow, fresh fruit with a skin that zips off. Should be able to work in cereals and fruit cups.") Where possible, the children should try to include nutritional characteristics (for example: "Wanted—low-fat, cold, white drink").

7. Have the children read their ads aloud to see if the others can guess the mystery foods.

YOUR EATING GUIDE

ACTIVITY THIRTY

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description
Do you have to give up all your favorite foods just because they're not the healthiest foods? No! Just eat them less often, and eat the more healthful ones more often. The handout in this activity shows kids how.

Purpose
To become familiar with foods that, for good health, should be eaten "anytime," "sometimes," or "now and then."

Materials and Resources
"Your Eating Guide" handout
Pencils

Procedure
1. Distribute copies of "Your Eating Guide"—a chart that offers guidelines for making nutritious food choices.

2. Explain that the "anytime" foods can be eaten anytime, because they are natural foods that are low in fat, sugar, and salt. The "sometimes" foods should not be eaten as often, because they contain greater amounts of fat, sugar, or salt, or they lack dietary fiber. The "now and then" foods

should be kept to a minimum, because they are usually high in fat, sugar, salt, or all three.

3. Tell the children that it's important to eat a variety of foods. So even if they stick to foods in the "anytime" category, they won't be feeding their bodies well unless they eat a variety of foods in this category–beans, grains, and nuts; fruits and vegetables; milk products; and poultry, fish, meat, and eggs.

4. Lead a discussion: Which foods are your favorites? Which category do most of your favorites come from? What do the categories mean? How often is "anytime," "sometimes," and "now and then?"

Older Kids Can Also . . .

–Create menus based on the recommendations in "Your Eating Guide."

–Learn their nutritional score. The children make a list of the foods they eat in one day. They find these foods on the handout and list the number that fall under each of the three categories. Scoring is as follows: Each "anytime" food gets one point; each "sometimes" food gets zero points; and each "now and then" food loses one point. The children with scores above zero are feeding their bodies well by concentrating on foods in the "anytime" category. Scores below zero mean too many "now and then" foods.

MAKE A GAME OF GOOD HEALTH

ACTIVITY THIRTY-ONE

Related Subjects

Language arts

Description

Children have a lot of choices. This activity makes a game of some useful and not-so-useful health advice to help children decide what's best for them.

Purpose

To reinforce several important health concepts:

–eat breakfast;
–avoid fatty foods;
–avoid salty foods;
–avoid sugary foods;
–eat foods with starch and fiber;
–get enough sleep;
–exercise regularly;
–don't smoke;
–don't drink alcoholic beverages; and
–don't use drugs.

Materials and Resources

"Make a Game of Good Health" handout
Scissors
Paste
Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
Dried beans
Dice

Procedure

1. Good nutrition lays a solid foundation for good health. But other health tips are important, too. Distribute copies of the two-page handout, "Make a Game of Good Health." The first page is a game board. The second page has messages to paste on the board.

2. Which messages are "health helpers"? Which are "health hurters"? Have the children cut out all the messages and temporarily arrange them in the appropriate boxes on the page. Encourage discussion, comments, and reactions. Does everyone agree with the classifications? Does anyone disagree with any of the points? Why, or why not?

3. Explain that each child will complete the game board on his or her handout by pasting "health helpers" in certain spaces and "health hurters" in others. The children may use as many of each as they like, and they may choose to contrast the two types with different colored crayons.

4. The game rules are up to the children, but here are some ideas to get them started:

–The beans are the game pieces, which are moved according to the number shown when one die is rolled.
–The object is to move from the beginning to the end of the board before your opponent. Or, the object is to gather as many points as possible before crossing the finish line.
–Landing on a "health helper" can mean either getting another turn or getting a certain number of points.
–Landing on a "health hurther" can mean either losing a turn or losing a certain number of points.

5. The children may wish to decorate their game boards or to start from scratch and make more elaborate ones.

6. When the game boards are completed, let the children try them out with each other.

YOUR PERSONAL BEST

Look at your list of foods and answer the following questions:

1. Are any of your choices fresh fruits?
   _____ Yes _____ No
   If yes, name them.

2. Are any of your choices fresh vegetables?
   _____ Yes _____ No
   If yes, name them.

3. Are any of your choices whole grain breads, muffins, cereals, or pasta?
   _____ Yes _____ No
   If yes, name them.

4. Are any of your choices poultry, fish, lean meat, or dried peas or beans (legumes)?
   _____ Yes _____ No
   If yes, name them.

5. Are any of your choices low-fat milk or skim milk, or low-fat cheese or yogurt?
   _____ Yes _____ No
   If yes, name them.

Write your score here. _____

Is your diet your personal best? _____

How can you make it better?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

HAVE AN ACTIVE DAY!

Sports and games are fun—and healthy, too. But did you know there are lots of other ways to fit exercise and movement into your day? Just take a look at this list.

Put a star (*) next to the activities you already do, and a check (✓) next to those you'd like to try.

Stretch every part of your body before you get out of bed
Take a walk instead of riding in a car
Instead of walking, skip or hop
Walk a dog
Ride a bike
Make a bed
Mop a floor
Sweep a floor
Go roller skating or ice skating
Beat a dusty rug on the side of your house or apartment
Jump rope
Carry out the trash
Help move furniture
Clear the table
Dance to the radio or stereo
Do push-ups while you watch TV
Rake leaves
Shovel snow
Wash a car
Plant or care for a garden
Use the stairs instead of an escalator or elevator
Walk up and down the stairs if you have nothing else to do
Flex your muscles while you wait in line
Reach for things high up on a shelf
Bend at the waist and swing like a rag-doll before going to bed

The next step is to plan your activities for a week. Write the name of at least one activity next to the name of each day. Include the names of some of your favorite sports and games, too.

How many can you do in one day? How many can you do in one week? See how active you can be!

DAY	ACTIVITIES
MONDAY	
TUESDAY	
WEDNESDAY	
THURSDAY	
FRIDAY	
SATURDAY	
SUNDAY	

YOUR EATING GUIDE

	ANYTIME	IN MODERATION	NOW & THEN
BEANS GRAINS & NUTS	• wholegrain breads & rolls • dried beans & peas • brown rice • plain popcorn • whole grain cereal • whole wheat pasta	• white bread or rolls • pizza • pasta (except whole wheat) • peanut butter • nuts • granola • white rice	• presweetened breakfast cereals • doughnuts & sticky buns
FRUITS & VEGETABLES	• all fresh fruits and vegetables (except those listed to the right) • potatoes • unsweetened fruit juices • unsweetened frozen and canned fruits • unsalted vegetable juices	• avocado • dried fruit • fruits canned in syrup • cole slaw • french fries • vegetables canned in salted water	• coconut • pickles
MILK PRODUCTS	• skim milk • low-fat milk (1% milkfat) • low-fat cottage cheese • low-fat yogurt, plain • nonfat dry milk	• regular cottage cheese • low-fat milk (2% milk-fat) • part-skim cheeses • ice milk • low-fat yogurt, sweetened • frozen low-fat yogurt	• hard cheeses • ice cream • processed cheeses • whole milk • whole milk yogurt
POULTRY FISH MEAT & EGGS	• most fish (not fried) • chicken (w/out skin) • turkey (w/out skin) • water-packed tuna • egg whites	• pork loin or shoulder* • oil-packed tuna • lamb leg or loin* • veal* • steaks: flank, round or lean sirloin* • roasts: rump, arm-bone, or round* • chicken/turkey with skin	• eggs (about 3/week) • hot dogs • cold cuts • bacon • ground beef • untrimmed red meats • roasts: rib or blade • spareribs • fried chicken and fish

*Trim all outside fat

START
MAKE A GAME
FREE ZONE
OF GOOD HEALTH
FINISH

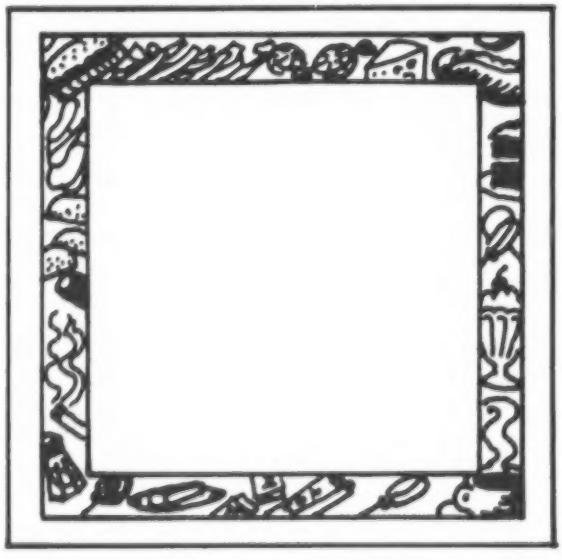
HEALTH HELPERS AND HEALTH HURTERS

Which of these are "health helpers"? Which are "health hurters"? Cut them out and put them in the correct box. Do not use paste or glue. That's for the next step!

Eat Breakfast	Drink Alcohol	Avoid Fatty Foods	Get Enough Sleep	Eat Sugary Foods
Don't Smoke	Avoid Salty Foods	Skip Breakfast	Stay Up All Night	Eat Lots of Salty Foods
Eat Lots of Fatty Foods	Avoid Sugary Foods	Get Enough Exercise	Smoke, Smoke, Smoke!	Avoid Foods with Starch and Fiber
Don't Drink Alcohol	Use Drugs	Don't Use Drugs	Be Lazy – Don't Move!	Eat Foods with Starch and Fiber

HEALTH HELPERS

HEALTH HURTERS



NIBBLES

Chart Your Diet

The eating guide in Activity 30 makes a useful, attractive poster. Let the children color and decorate the handouts and take them home to display on the refrigerator.

And One, And Two, And....

If you have access to a video cassette recorder, play one of the new exercise tapes made just for kids. Lots of audio tapes and records also are available. Better yet, let the children create their own exercise routine to do each day in class. They can tape their own instructions or simply work out to the sounds of records or the radio.

Fun With Favorite Foods

Good food is something to celebrate! The children draw or write about their favorite healthful foods and decorate the room with their creations. The more foods, the merrier!

Recipe Roundup

What's your favorite recipe? The children copy their favorites from cookbooks or family collections, decorate them, and add them to a class recipe book. Some children might want to demonstrate their recipes before the group.

Make a Lip-Smacking Quilt

Nothing is quite as meaningful as a quilt pieced together with personal patches. The children make "favorite food" squares from paper, felt, or cloth, and combine them into one large class quilt to hang on the wall.

I Resolve To....

Resolutions don't always have to be made on New Year's; the beginning of the school year, the first day of spring, and other "fresh start" days are good times to make some personal health promises. Encourage the children to think about diet, exercise, and other factors that contribute to happy, healthy living.

TAKE-HOME TIPS

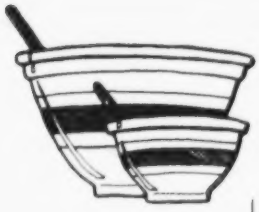
Why should _____ [student's name] eat healthful foods? For his/her health, of course! But knowing that foods are good for us doesn't mean we'll eat them. We have to *want* to eat them!

_____ is learning about his/her food likes and dislikes, and how they add up to a healthy diet. He/she is also learning about some other ways to lead a healthy life. Here are some things you can do together:

• If your child hasn't already brought home an "Eating Guide" chart for your refrigerator, ask for it. The chart offers some important guidelines for making nutritious food choices:
–The "anytime" foods can be eaten anytime, because they are natural foods that are low in fat, sugar, and salt.
–The "sometimes" foods should not be eaten as often, because they contain more fat, sugar, or salt, or they lack dietary fiber.
–The "now and then" foods should be kept to a minimum, for they are high in fat, sugar, or salt, and low in fiber.

Look at the chart together, often, and plan meals that include mostly "anytime" foods.

• Physical fitness is important for you and your child. What are the benefits? To name a few–weight control, healthier heart, stronger bones, sounder sleep, and more peace of mind. Find an activity that you and your child like to do together, and do it as often as you can. Here are some ideas: bike riding, walking, aerobic dancing, frisbee throwing, skating, and kite flying.



COOK IT TOGETHER

For your health's sake, it's a good idea to stay away from too much fat, sugar, and salt. But that doesn't mean you have to give up all of your favorite foods!

Take pizza, for example. The kind you get at most pizza parlors or in the frozen foods section of your supermarket is likely to be high in fat and salt. This pizza, however, is just right—for your health, and for your appetite! Besides being low in both fat and salt, it has the added bonus of starch and fiber from a whole-grain crust and plenty of fresh vegetables on top.

YUMMY WHOLE-GRAIN PIZZA

Makes 4 servings

Crust

⅔ cup warm water
1 package yeast
2⅓ cups whole-wheat flour
¼ cup frozen apple juice concentrate
2 tablespoons nonfat dry milk
1 teaspoon low-sodium soy sauce (optional)

Sauce

1 15-ounce can unsalted tomato sauce
1 6-ounce can unsalted tomato paste
¼ teaspoon black pepper
¼ teaspoon crushed dried oregano
⅛ teaspoon crushed dried thyme
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
½ teaspoon low-sodium soy sauce or ¼ teaspoon salt

Topping

3 tablespoons low-sodium vegetable juice or water
1 medium onion, sliced in thin rounds
1 or 2 green peppers, sliced thin
½ cup part-skim mozzarella cheese
¼ pound mushrooms, rinsed, dried, and sliced
1 small zucchini, sliced or grated
¼ cup grated parmesan cheese

CRUST: Pour the water into a large bowl. Sprinkle the yeast on the water, cover the bowl with a small towel, and let the mixture sit for 5 minutes.

Add 1 cup of the flour, the apple juice concentrate, and the milk. Mix well. Cover again with the towel and let a "sponge" form (about 10 minutes).

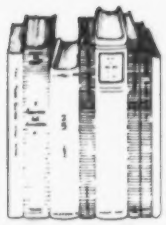
Add the soy sauce or salt (if desired) and the remaining flour, ½ cup at a time, until dough is light and just slightly sticky. Knead on a floured board, adding a little flour to the dough if necessary, for about 5 minutes. Return the dough to the bowl, cover bowl with a towel, and let it sit for 1 hour, until dough is doubled in bulk. Meanwhile, prepare the sauce and topping.

SAUCE: Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan, bring to a boil, and simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes. Set aside.

TOPPING: In a large skillet, simmer all the vegetables in the juice or water until tender. Set aside.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Punch down the dough and knead it for a few minutes. Roll it out on a floured board to form a 10-inch circle. Place the dough on a non-stick pan. Spoon the sauce evenly over the dough, except for the edge, and bake for 15 minutes. Remove the pizza from the oven, add the topping, and bake for another 15 minutes.



RESOURCES

Diet

For a free copy of "Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans," published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, write: Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colo. 81009. (Audience: older children and adults)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture also has materials to help you use the guidelines. Write: Human Nutrition Information Service, USDA, Room 325A Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. (Audience: varies)

Center for Science in the Public Interest has published a wide variety of wall charts, books, pamphlets, and computer programs. Write for a catalog: CSPI, 1501 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Also, see page 151. (Audience: varies)

Fitness

For a list of materials on physical fitness, write: President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 450 5th Street, N.W., Suite 7103, Washington, D.C. 20001. Recent titles include "Walking for Exercise and Pleasure," "Fitness Fundamentals," and "Get Fit! Basic Youth Fitness Program." (Audience: varies)

FOODS, AND YOU, YOUR WORLD

CHAPTER 4

Activity 32
POLL YOUR PALS
Compare your friends' eating habits with your own.

Activity 33
PARTY-PERFECT TREATS
A party with healthful foods is something to celebrate!

Activity 34
TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR SCHOOL LUNCH
See how the mid-day meal at school stacks up.

Activity 35
BE A FAMILY FOOD SLEUTH
Who in your family eats what, and why?

Activity 36
DINNER WINNERS
Don't just eat dinner, make it!

Activity 37
CULTURALLY SPEAKING
Share the taste treats of your heritage or someone else's.

Activity 38
CELEBRITY NUTRITION
See if your favorite local celebrity has dietary habits to crow about.

Activity 39
FAST AND HEALTHY
Make a nutritious meal out of fast-food offerings.

Activity 40
MEALTIME MINDBENDERS
Got a problem with breakfast, lunch, dinner, or snacks? Go figure it out!

Activity 41
FIND THE NUTRITION EXPERTS
Learn who has the nutrition know-how in your community.

The social aspect of food is one of the nicest things about it. Chapter 4 takes children on a guided tour of their world and shows them how healthful eating can be a part of every experience.

When children eat with their families, for example, they not only share good tastes, but good times, as well. And sometimes they even share a little bit of history. Foods that echo a child's social heritage make an important statement about who he or she is. Even the most all-American kid you know will take pride in knowing that a favorite dish also was eaten by far-off relatives long ago.

One activity in this chapter helps children take a careful look at the way their families eat. Another encourages them to see how different cultures prepare some basic foods. These and other exercises demonstrate that good food is for everyone—no matter where you live, who you are, or what you're doing.

Eating school lunch? At a fast-food restaurant? Chowing down at a party? Children can avoid tempting "junk foods" when they know they have a choice.

Lunching with friends? Admiring local celebrities? A child's best friends may not always have the best diets, and local heroes may eat some less-than-heroic foods. But children who've seen the nutrition light won't stray too far off course.

ACTIVITY THIRTY-TWO

POLL YOUR PALS

Related Subjects

Mathematics, language arts

Description

To what extent do our peers influence the way we eat? The children survey the eating habits of their friends and classmates and compare them with their own.

Purpose

To learn how the eating habits of others compare with and influence our own.

Materials and Resources

"Your Eating Guide" handout (see page 67)

Paper and pencils

Procedure

1. Ask the children if they think their eating habits resemble those of their friends or classmates. Which particular likes and dislikes do they think they share with their peers? Which foods do they think they alone like or dislike?

2. Tell the children they will each survey four friends or classmates to learn more about their food preferences.

3. Distribute copies of the "Your Eating Guide" handout. Tell the children that this chart offers guidelines for making nutritious food choices. Review the food selections in each column, explaining that the "anytime" foods can be eaten anytime, because they are low in fat, added sugar, and salt. The "sometimes" foods should not be eaten as often, because they may contain moderate amounts of fat, added sugar or salt, or lack dietary fiber. The "now and then" foods should not be eaten very often at all, because they are high in saturated fat, added sugar, salt, or all three.

4. Tell the children to write each of the three headings ("anytime," "sometimes," and "now and then") on a piece of paper. They should choose 10 of their favorite foods from the chart and write the names under the appropriate headings.

5. The next step is for each child to count the number of foods listed in each category and to record this information for later use.

6. The children each survey four other children their same age or grade, who also choose 10 foods from the handout. The survey-takers list these foods, categorize them, and add them up, as described in steps 4 and 5.

7. Discuss the results. How did the survey participants' answers compare with those

of the surveyors? Does each group of five children seem to have the same kind of food habits (for example, liking lots of "anytime" foods and avoiding "now and then" foods)? If we seem to have the same food preferences as our friends and classmates, why is that? If we seem to have completely different food preferences, why is that?

8. Ask the children if they think their peers influence their own eating habits. Have they learned to like new foods because other children like them? Are they embarrassed to eat certain foods because other children dislike them? What are the most popular foods for children their age? What are the least popular?

PARTY-PERFECT TREATS

ACTIVITY THIRTY-THREE

Related Subjects

Language arts

Description

What's a party without lots of sweets and fat- and salt-laden treats? A healthful one! The children plan a party with good-for-you foods. One recipe for a naturally bright-pink, surprisingly nutritious "ice cream" is included.

Purpose

To think about and try some alternatives to traditional party foods.

Materials and Resources

Chalkboard, chalk, and eraser; or chart paper and marker

Ingredients and equipment for recipe included with this activity (optional)

Procedure

1. What foods do we serve and eat at parties? Have the children write the names of these party treats on the chalkboard.

2. When the class has run out of ideas, look at the list together. Which foods are the least nutritious? Erase them from the chalkboard, and keep erasing until only the most nutritious foods remain. How many are there?

3. Ask the children to think of some alternatives to party "junk foods." Here are some suggestions:
- Instead of candy, eat fresh fruit or moderate amounts of dried fruit. (Dried fruit can stick to teeth and make cavities, just like sticky candy.)
- Instead of gooey chocolate cake with icing, eat angelfood cake—plain or with fruit on top.
- Instead of potato chips, eat whole grain crackers.
- Instead of soft drinks, drink fruit juice—plain or mixed with club soda.
- Pizza is fine—but don't pile on the cheese or meat toppings; they can add lots of fat and salt. Add green peppers, mushrooms, and other fresh vegetables to increase the vitamins, minerals, and fiber in this food.
- Don't pop too many hot dogs! Again, fat and salt are the culprits. Hamburgers can be too fatty, too. How about lean beef or chicken kabobs or tuna sandwiches?

4. And instead of ice cream and cake, try the following healthful topping on angelfood cake. It's lower in fat and sugar, but you wouldn't know it from the taste!

SHIRLEY'S STRAWBERRIES

Makes 10-12 servings

Equipment

Knife
Egg beater or electric mixer
Large bowl
Freezer

Ingredients

1 egg white
1 pint strawberries (or equivalent in frozen berries)
1 ripe banana
¼ cup sugar

Directions

Slice strawberries and banana.

Put all ingredients in large bowl. Beat until fluffy.

Freeze.

Serve plain or with angelfood cake.

TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR SCHOOL LUNCH

ACTIVITY THIRTY-FOUR

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description
School lunch is too important a part of day to take for granted. The checklist in this activity helps children take a new look at this meal and evaluate its pluses and minuses.

Purpose
To become more involved with school lunch–an important contribution to daily nutrition.

Materials and Resources
"Take a Look at Your School Lunch" handout
Chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and marker
Pencils
Cafeteria staff, teachers, school administrators, other students

Procedure
1. Find out how many children in the class eat school lunch. Ask the other children why they do not. List their reasons on the chalkboard under the heading "Minuses."

2. Ask all the children for their general reactions to school lunch. List the negative reactions under "Minuses" and the positive reactions under "Pluses."

3. Distribute copies of the "Take a Look at Your School Lunch" checklist. Read the entries together.

4. Tell the children to talk to other students, other teachers, and the cafeteria staff while completing the checklist, and to consider the "pluses" and "minuses" discussed in class.

5. Discuss the completed checklists together. Revise the lists on the chalkboard to reflect the results.

6. Make a plan of action to address the good and bad points uncovered in the checklists. Here are some to consider:
–Reward the cafeteria staff for the good work they have done by writing a thank-you note, or by giving them flowers, certificates, or other tokens of your esteem.
–Set up a student committee that will work with parents, teachers, the school administration, and the cafeteria staff to improve school lunch.
–Invite the school nurse, local doctors or nurses, or other community health professionals to speak to students, teachers, parents, and others about the importance of eating healthful school lunches.
–Present the cafeteria staff with a list of recommendations.
–Prepare a presentation to deliver to the next PTA meeting or other meeting that involves parents and the school staff. Present the problems clearly, and recommend some possible solutions.

BE A FAMILY FOOD SLEUTH

ACTIVITY THIRTY-FIVE

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description
The foods in our kitchens say a lot about the people who eat there. The children survey their own homes and then interview family members to learn which foods are personal favorites and why.

Purpose
To increase awareness of family food favorites.

Materials and Resources

Paper and pencils
Family members

Procedure

1. Ask the children if they have ever really paid attention to what others in their households like to eat. Does everyone in their family eat the same things? Does everyone like the same things?

2. Tell the children that tonight they will pretend to be "family food sleuths"–detectives who uncover the real stories behind their families' eating habits. In their roles, the children will survey and list the contents of their kitchen shelves to learn what their families eat.

(Tell the children that you are not asking them to be "spies." The information they gather will help them understand how their families eat, and why. They will share some of this information in a general way during class discussion; they will not reveal intimate family secrets!)

3. With their list in hand, the children will ask family members questions about their likes and dislikes. Have the group develop one set of questions for everyone to use. Here are some suggestions:
–What is your favorite breakfast food? Why?
–If you eat lunch at home or take a homemade lunch to school or work, what do you like to eat best? Why?
–If you do not eat a homemade lunch, what do you eat, and why?
–What is your favorite dinner food? Why?
–What is your favorite snack food? Why?
–If you had your choice, what food would you banish from the kitchen? What food would you like to eat every day?

Tell the children to think about their own answers to these questions, too.

4. When the "sleuthing" is complete, encourage discussion:
–Why does your family eat what they do?
–Do any of these factors play a role–habit, taste, ethnic heritage, religious requirement, nutrition? What other factors do family members consider?
–How do your food preferences compare with those of your family?
–Name some of the most unhealthful foods your family eats. Why are they eaten?
–Name some of the most healthful foods your family eats. Why are they eaten?

5. The children might want to plan a family meal that includes at least one of each family member's favorite healthful foods.

DINNER WINNERS

ACTIVITY THIRTY-SIX

Related Subjects

Language arts

Description

Children care a lot about the evening meal, but probably have little to do with its preparation. In this activity, children plan dinners they can make at home alone or with the help of family members. (Recipes for an easy-to-prepare dinner appear on the COOK IT TOGETHER page in this chapter.)

Purpose

To learn how to become more involved with meal planning and preparation at home.

Materials and Resources

"Dinner experts"–parents, dietitians, nutritionists, school lunch personnel, restaurant chefs, or other persons who regularly prepare dinners
Cookbooks
Cooking magazines or those that contain recipes
Paper and pencils

Procedure

1. Have the children list the foods they ate for dinner the night before. Ask them to rank this dinner from 1 to 10, with 1 being

their least favorite dinner, and 10 being their most favorite. Record the number of children who choose each rating.

2. Ask the children who ranked the dinner at 8 or above why they liked the dinner so much.

3. Ask the children who ranked the dinner at 7 or below why they didn't like it so much. What would they do to improve the dinner?

4. Ask the children to describe some guidelines for a healthful meal (low in fat, sugar, and salt; high in fiber and starch).

5. Ask the children to list their general ideas of what makes a delicious and healthful dinner. (For example, one child might list the following: juice appetizer, main course of fish, two green vegetables, potatoes, fruit dessert.)

6. Assemble the children into small groups to share and discuss their ideas.

7. Invite "dinner experts"—parents, dietitians, nutritionists, school lunch personnel, restaurant chefs, or other persons who know about or regularly prepare dinners—to share their expertise. Encourage the children to consider incorporating some of these ideas into their own thinking.

8. Have the children return to their small groups to plan a delicious and healthful dinner—one they can make at home alone or with the help of family members. The finished menus should list the specific dishes, and, where possible, include the recipes. Each group may choose to develop one dinner menu idea, or one for each group member.

You might suggest that after the group chooses a general framework for the meal (such as whether there will be an appetizer or dessert, the type of main course, how many vegetables, and so on), each child develops his or her own variation on that theme (for example, choosing different meat entrees for the main course, or different kinds of salads).

9. When the groups have completed their menus, have them present them to the other children.

10. Encourage the children to try their menus at home, including shopping for the ingredients and preparing the meal. Ask those who have tried their menus at home to rate them from 1 to 10.

Older Kids Can Also . . .

—Test the menus (or recruit help to test them) and compile the successful ones into a cookbook for parents, teachers, and other interested people.

CULTURALLY SPEAKING

ACTIVITY THIRTY-SEVEN

Related Subjects

Social studies

Description

One culture's won-ton is another culture's knish. The children investigate the variations on food themes throughout a variety of cultures. A tasting party completes the activity.

Purpose

To learn that different cultures eat different varieties of basic foods.

Materials and Resources

To be determined by the children
Ingredients and equipment for recipes included with this activity (optional)

Procedure

1. Explain that a culture is a group of people that shares certain unique customs and beliefs. Americans have a culture of their own. So do Californians, Jews, Chinese-Americans, Hispanics, and Black Americans—separate cultural groups that also are part of the American culture. All countries have a culture all their own.

2. Ask the children to name some cultural groups that live nearby and some that live

far away. Have each child choose a culture that most interests him or her.

3. Let the children vote for the one category the group will study:
–root vegetables
–green vegetables
–fruits
–grains
–beans
–breads
–fish
–poultry
–meat
–dairy foods

4. Tell the children to investigate their culture's food offerings within the chosen category. The length of time needed will vary according to the depth of research involved. Some possible resources include:
–interviewing family members, neighbors, classmates, and friends who are members of that culture;
–visiting local ethnic restaurants and grocery stores;
–visiting museums and ethnic festivals;
–using library reference materials;
–reading pertinent non-fiction and fiction books; and
–corresponding with pen pals. (The International Friendship League is one very good source. To apply for a pen pal, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to: International Friendship League, 55 Mount Vernon St., Boston, MA 02108.)

5. Encourage the children to make a record of their findings in one or more of the following ways:
–Make a list.
–Draw pictures.
–Collect photographs.
–Save food labels.
–Clip or copy recipes.
–Get samples of the foods.
–Recruit members of the ethnic group to talk to the group about their culture's foods.

6. When the children have completed their research, have a "show-and-tell-and-taste" party. You might want to include these healthful ethnic recipes:

Cool Sauce (Greek)

This recipe was adapted from one in *Delicious!* magazine.

Equipment
Knife
Cutting board
Grater
Measuring spoons
Medium bowl with cover (or use foil or plastic wrap)
Refrigerator

Ingredients
1 large cucumber–peeled, seeded, and shredded
2 cups plain yogurt
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon chopped dill (or 1 teaspoon dried)
Freshly ground pepper, to taste
Pita bread

Directions
Combine all the ingredients in a medium bowl.
Cover and refrigerate for one hour before serving.
Serve with pita bread.

Carrot-Orange Salad (Israel)

This recipe was adapted from one in *Eat Better, Live Better,* Joseph L. Gardner, Editor. Reader's Digest Association (Pleasantville, N.Y.) 1982.

Equipment
Grater
Measuring cups
Measuring spoons
Knife
Cutting board

Ingredients
1 pound carrots, washed and grated
½ cup orange or pineapple juice
2 tablespoons sesame seeds (optional)
½ cup raisins
2-3 oranges, tangerines, or tangelos–peeled and sectioned

Directions
Combine all ingredients in a bowl.
Serve plain or on fresh salad greens.

CELEBRITY NUTRITION

ACTIVITY THIRTY-EIGHT

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description

Celebrities are famous for many things–why not include their approaches to diet and health? The children survey some favorite local celebrities to determine who has the healthiest diet and lifestyle.

Purpose

To choose appropriate role models in the areas of diet and health.

Materials and Resources

Equipment to prepare and reproduce letters and surveys

Procedure

1. Tell the children that they, as a group, will survey their favorite local celebrities to determine who has the healthiest diet and lifestyle.

2. Ask each child to choose at least one celebrity to be surveyed. Suggest that they consider well-known local persons in the fields of newspaper reporting, radio or television broadcasting, sports, entertainment, the arts, business, agriculture, religion, social services, public interest work, and so on. In the event that several children select the same celebrity, offer some alternatives. Have the children–individually or in small groups–secure the mailing addresses of the persons chosen.

3. Prepare the survey together. Emphasize that the easiest surveys to evaluate are those with "objective" questions–questions that elicit short, multiple choice, or yes-or-no answers. Tell the children to use this type of question to gather information about diet. Here is one sample objective question:

WHICH FOOD WOULD YOU PREFER TO EAT? CIRCLE "a" OR "b."

1. a. fried chicken	b. broiled, skinless chicken
2. a. skim milk	b. whole milk
3. a. ice cream	b. plain, low-fat yogurt with fresh fruit

The object here is to provide two obvious choices: one that is healthful and the other, not so healthful.

4. Emphasize that whatever type questions are used, they should be developed with the celebrities' nutritional habits in mind, and not their knowledge of nutrition. Suggest a minimum of 10 objective questions.

5. Explain that many of the celebrities may supply the "healthiest" answers to these objective nutrition questions, so another type of question may be needed as a "tie-breaker." This question will be a "subjective" one that asks the celebrities to supply any information about their lifestyles that they think helps keep them healthy. This could be something like:

IN 50 WORDS OR LESS, TELL US WHY YOUR LIFESTYLE IS THE HEALTHIEST OF ANY CELEBRITY IN TOWN.

6. Work together to compose a cover letter for the survey. Include a sentence or two that informs the celebrities that the information they provide may be released to the public. This protects the celebrities, you, and the children from any embarrassment or potential legal problems.

7. Enlist the aid of children or parents to type the survey and cover letter. Duplicate both.

8. Have each child mail the survey to the celebrities he or she selected (making sure there is no duplication of effort). Warn the children that celebrities often are very busy people, and so some surveys may not be answered or returned.

9. Evaluate the surveys as a group. Consider honoring several celebrities if there are a number of good responses.

10. Notify the winners.

11. As a group, write a press release that announces the results and send it to the local news media. (Press releases tell who, what, where, when, why, and how.)

12. The children might want to invite the celebrities to an awards ceremony, or make posters that publicize the results of the survey (many celebrities will be happy to provide photographs for this purpose!).

ACTIVITY THIRTY-NINE

FAST AND HEALTHY

Related subjects
Language arts

Description
Fast food doesn't have to be forbidden food. It's getting more healthful all the time! After completing a handout and visiting local fast-food restaurants, the children plan "fast and healthy" meals.

Purpose
To learn that it is possible to eat healthfully at fast-food restaurants if you know what to look for and what to avoid.

Materials and Resources
"Fast and Healthy" handout
Paper and pencils
Fast-food restaurants

Procedure
1. Ask the children to name their favorite fast-food restaurants. What do they like about those restaurants? How often do they visit? What do they order?

2. Do the children think fast food is healthful food? Chances are, they'll say no, if they're thinking about the typical fast-food meal of a burger, french fries, and shake.

3. Explain that there are, indeed, healthful offerings at fast-food restaurants—if you know what to look for and what to avoid.

4. Distribute copies of the "Fast and Healthy" handout. This lists some typical fast-food offerings, along with healthier alternatives (which may or may not be available at the same restaurant). Tell the children that more and more fast-food restaurants are beginning to offer these healthful alternatives to help people cut down on fat, sodium, and sugar, and to help them eat more complex carbohydrates (starch and fiber).

5. Have the children visit neighborhood fast-food restaurants and make lists of the healthful offerings there.

6. Discuss the children's findings:
—Did they find any healthful alternatives that were not on the list?
—Are there enough healthful offerings at any one restaurant to comprise a healthful breakfast? If so, have the children write the menu for a breakfast at that restaurant. If not, they should use the offerings from two or more restaurants to plan a "traveling" breakfast. Would it be fun to eat breakfast this way? Would it be convenient?
—Repeat the process for lunch and dinner.
—What are some healthful alternatives the fast-food restaurants haven't tried?

Older Kids Can Also . . .
—Ask for ingredient and nutrition information at the fast-food restaurants they visit. If unavailable, the children request it by mail. Questions for discussion:

Did you learn a lot about the foods from these materials? What didn't you learn?

What kind of frying fat do the restaurants use? What kind is used at home? Which is better? Why?

Now that you know what's inside certain fast foods, does it change your mind about ordering them? Why?

ACTIVITY FORTY

MEALTIME MINDBENDERS

Related Subjects
Drama

Description
Given hypothetical food problems, the children dramatize what they would do if faced with the same situations.

Purpose
To apply knowledge of nutrition to hypothetical real-life situations.

Materials and Resources
"Mealtime Mindbenders" handout (one "mindbender" to each group)

Procedure
1. Divide the children into small groups. Give each group one "mindbender" problem from the handout.

2. Explain that each group will have 15 minutes to come up with a solution to the problem and to decide how to dramatize both the problem and the solution to the rest of the children. The groups may use as many children as they like to make the presentation.

3. When all the groups are ready, have the first one read its problem to the other children and then make its presentation.

4. After each group completes its presentation, encourage the other children to comment on the solution. Use these questions as a basis for discussion: Do you agree with the solution? If so, why? If not, what would you have done instead? What does the solution say about good nutrition practices?

5. Here are some suggested "solutions" to the problems:

Problem 1–Serve some light, healthful appetizers, such as tomato or fruit juice, whole-grain crackers, or fresh vegetables and yogurt dip. If you know how to use the stove or oven, ask your parents how to get dinner started before they come home.

Problem 2–Grab something to eat on the way to the bus, on the bus, or at school. Some good ideas include a roll, bread, or crackers with cheese, peanut butter, lean meat, poultry, or fish (pita bread has a great pocket for on-the-run meals); a hard-boiled egg; or a banana, apple, or other eat-out-of-hand fruit. Stay away from doughnuts and toaster pastries–they have lots of sugar and fat and very little fiber, starch, vitamins, or minerals.

Problem 3–You can try lecturing your friends, but showing them your good example will probably work a lot better. Stop by a grocery store to buy some delicious fresh fruit. Order fruit juice at a soda fountain. At a fast-food restaurant, instead of ordering hot dogs, hamburgers, or fried chicken or fish, get a salad bar serving or a broiled chicken sandwich on a multi-grain bun. Ask for pizza with vegetable toppings; forget the extra cheese or meat.

Problem 4–Again, your good example is the best teacher. Try to be calm. Discuss pleasant subjects. Help your parents prepare and serve dinner. After dinner, help clear the table and wash up. Eat slowly.

Problem 5–Without drawing attention to yourself, remove the skin and coating from the chicken, eat your potato and biscuit plain or with only a little butter, try to scrape some of the sauce from the vegetables (this is tricky!), and eat fresh fruit–and maybe a little ice cream–for dessert.

FIND THE NUTRITION EXPERTS

ACTIVITY FORTY-ONE

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description
Who are the nutrition experts in your community? This activity helps children find out by investigating local resources.

Purpose
To become familiar with a variety of nutrition information resources.

Materials and Resources
Pencils

Telephone directories
County Extension office
Dietitians, nutritionists, school nurse, and physicians, nurses, and other health professionals
Local chapters of the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association, and the American Cancer Society
Hospitals
Health clinics
Health hotlines
Supermarkets
Drug stores
Libraries

Procedure

1. School isn't the only place to learn about nutrition. Tell the children that most communities have at least several other nutrition resources—people and places to go to for information and answers to questions. See how many the children can name in their own community.

2. Give the children sufficient time to find more examples. Encourage the use of telephone directories, libraries, supermarkets, drug stores, and parents to help them find the answers.

3. Share and discuss the results. Following are some suggested answers, but every community is unique:

County Extension home economist—Look in the phone book under the county listings for "Cooperative Extension Service."
School nurse
Dietitian or *Nutritionist*
Doctor
Nurse
Local chapter of the American Red Cross
Local chapter of the American Heart Association
Local chapter of the American Diabetes Association
Local chapter of the American Cancer Society
Hospitals, health clinics—Many offer brochures and special classes to the community.
Health hotlines—Run by a variety of groups, these offer answers to questions or taped messages on specific topics.
Supermarkets, drug stores—Brochures on diet and health are offered free of charge.
Libraries—These offer a wealth of information in the form of books, encyclopedias, magazines, brochures, and other reference materials

4. Let the children supplement their knowledge of local health resources with information from some national resources. See the Resources section at the end of this chapter and at the end of Chapter 2 ("What's Inside Food?").

TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR SCHOOL LUNCH

	Yes	No
THE MEALS LOOK ATTRACTIVE		
THE MEALS TASTE GOOD		
HOT FOODS ARE HOT		
COLD FOODS ARE COLD		
FOODS ARE NOT TOO FATTY, SUGARY, OR SALTY		
A VARIETY OF FOODS IS SERVED		
THERE ISN'T A LOT OF WASTE		
TEACHERS EAT THE SAME FOOD		
THE CAFETERIA IS A NICE PLACE TO EAT		
THE LINES ARE SHORT AND MOVE FAST		
STUDENTS HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO EAT WITHOUT RUSHING		
THE CAFETERIA STAFF IS FRIENDLY		
STUDENTS HELP PLAN AND EVALUATE MENUS		
FOODS FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES AND COUNTRIES ARE SERVED		
VENDING MACHINES DO NOT COMPETE WITH SCHOOL LUNCH FOOD		
MENUS AREN'T REPEATED OVER AND OVER AGAIN		
FRESH FRUITS ARE SERVED FOR DESSERT		
WHOLE GRAIN BREADS AND FRESH VEGETABLES ARE SERVED OFTEN		
THERE IS ENOUGH TO EAT		

COMMENTS

Healthy Foods	Tsp. of Fat
Salad	0
Plain Baked Potato	0
2% Milk	1
Cottage Cheese	1
Roasted Chicken Breast	2
Chili (8 oz.)	2
Whole Milk	2

Unhealthy Foods	Tsp. of Fat
Triple Cheeseburger	15
Bacon Cheeseburger	10
Swiss & Bacon Burger	10
Baked potato, Superstuffed	9
Breakfast Crescent Sandwich with Ham	9
Egg & Biscuit platter with Sausage	9
Ham & Swiss Burger	9

FAST AND HEALTHY

Fast and less healthful	Fast and more healthful
Shake	Low-fat milk
French fries	Plain baked potato
Salad loaded with high-calorie, high-fat dressing	Plain salad, or with some low-calorie, low-fat dressing
Double cheeseburger with sauce on white bun	Hamburger on a multi-grain bun
Fried chicken or chicken nuggets	Roasted, baked, or broiled chicken
Croissant or biscuit	Plain English muffin
Soft drink	Fruit juice
Fried fish	Baked or broiled fish
Ice cream or fried fruit pie	Fresh fruit salad

MEALTIME MINDBENDERS

Problem 1:

Company is coming for dinner tonight, but your parents have to work late. A married couple and their six-year-old child are expected at 6:00 p.m. Your parents will be home at 7:00 p.m. Dinner just needs to be heated up, so you don't have to worry about cooking. But your guests are hungry. What do you do? (Remember, you want to wait for your parents to come home before eating dinner, and you don't want to spoil your guests' appetites.)

Problem 2:

You overslept. You'll probably miss the school bus if you sit down at the table and eat breakfast with the rest of the family. You know that if you miss breakfast you get very tired and hungry, but you also know that you can't be late today, because there will be a test first thing. What do you do?

Problem 3:

You and your friends like to go to the shopping mall on Saturdays. There are lots of things to eat there—most of them "junk food." Today, your friends are eating practically everything they see. You know more about nutrition than they do, and you would like to teach them a thing or two. What do you do?

Problem 4:

Your family doesn't know how to relax at dinner. Your mother and father race to put food on the table. Your brother and sister argue with each other. Everyone eats too quickly. You would like to put a stop to all of this. What do you do?

Problem 5:

Your friend's parents have invited you to eat dinner at their house. The problem is, the food has more fat than you like to eat. The main course is fried chicken, baked potatoes with sour cream and butter on the side, biscuits with more butter, and vegetables in a thick, greasy sauce. Dessert is ice cream, whipped cream, and fresh fruit. If you want to be polite, but eat as little fat as possible, what do you do?

NIBBLES

Movie Food

When kids visit a movie theater or snuggle up to a home video, what foods are likely to be by their side? Probably candy, soft drinks, and salty popcorn (it's usually popped in saturated coconut oil), to name only a few. See who can make the longest list of *healthful* movie snacks.

The Junk Food Squad

Where does "junk food" lurk? Some likely spots for these nutrition nasties are in vending machines at school and in the community. Have the children seek out the "villainous vends" and make a list of more healthful vending machine treats.

School Lunch Survey

You can learn a lot about school lunch from its eaters. Help the children conduct an "exit survey" of children returning their lunch trays. Which foods went uneaten? Which foods were the favorites? Why?

Culture Club

You know the expression, "every picture tells a story." Well, every food tells a story, too, especially when it's from a different culture. Encourage the children to bring special foods from home—a can of sauce, a box of noodles, a salad to share—that say something about their own cultural heritage.

Plan a Perfect Picnic

Why not have a picnic lunch at school now and then? In warm weather, have it outside; in cold, have it inside! The key to a picnic is informality. Plan a spread of finger foods, including raw vegetable pick-ups, yogurt dips, whole-grain breads, low-fat fillings, and fresh fruit.

The Gift of Health

Many organizations offer free publications about diet and health. Have the children write away for some and collect others from community resources. A folder stuffed with these goodies makes a great gift for parents.

TAKE-HOME TIPS

_____ [student's name] is learning that what she/he eats has a lot to do with the people and things around her/him. Parents, friends, school, parties, fast-food restaurants. . . . these are just some of the influences on a child's diet. Here are some ways you can help each other eat healthful foods:

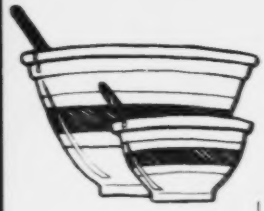
• Time spent in front of the TV is tastebud-tempting time. Make it easier to snack healthfully by creating a "smart snack" area in the refrigerator, freezer, or kitchen cabinet. Ideas: cut-up fresh vegetables; a bowl of fruit salad; homemade dips from whipped cottage cheese, low-fat yogurt, herbs, and spices; low-fat, low-salt crackers and breadsticks; frozen grapes or bananas; frozen low-fat yogurt (delicious when thawed to spooning consistency).

• Does ice cream and cake a birthday party make? Prepare healthful foods for the next family birthday party. You'll help set the stage for a healthier family and many more birthdays to come!

• Search out recipes from different cultures and other lands. Mix and match them into family meals. Who says Mexican tacos don't go with Chinese stir-fried vegetables?

• Here's a fun and constructive summer activity. When school friends are scattered near and far, postcards are a great way to keep in touch—and to remind each other about good nutrition! Make them out of 3×5-inch pieces of cardboard; color or paste on pictures of good-for-you foods; use the other side for a message and the address (refer to ready-made postcards for dimensions); and don't forget the postage.

• Next time you go to the movies, pack some healthful snacks together. You'll save calories—and money! How about unbuttered popcorn with herbs instead of salt? Or mini-sandwiches on whole-grain bread?



COOK IT TOGETHER

Some fast-food favorites have lots of fat and salt. But you can make similar foods in your own kitchen without harming your health. Try these recipes for "fried" chicken and french "fries," adapted from recipes in *Don't Eat Your Heart Out Cookbook* (by Joseph C. Piscatella, Workman Publishing Company, Inc., New York, 1982). Add a salad and fresh fruit, and you have yourselves a "junk food" meal without the junk!

UN-FRIED CHICKEN

½ chicken breast per person
Safflower oil
Whole wheat flour
Pepper
Paprika

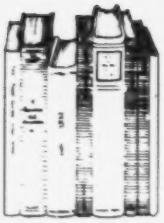
1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Remove skin from chicken.
3. Brush each piece of chicken with safflower oil. Dredge lightly in flour. Season with pepper. Sprinkle with paprika.
4. Bake at 425 degrees Fahrenheit 35-40 minutes. Turn; bake 10-25 minutes longer or until tender.

FRENCH UN-FRIES

1 potato per person
Curry powder, cayenne, grated cheese, or other favorite no-salt seasoning

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Cut potatoes into strips. Arrange on a teflon baking sheet, or a regular baking sheet sprayed with a non-stick cooking spray.
3. Bake 15-20 minutes or until brown. Turn; bake 15-20 minutes or until tender.
4. Sprinkle favorite seasoning over finished potatoes.

Note: To shorten baking time, parboil potatoes 15 minutes; slice and bake.



RESOURCES

National Health Resources

Write to these government or nonprofit agencies for information on publications:

American Heart Association, 7320 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, Tex. 75231.

Center for Science in the Public Interest, 1501 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Food and Drug Administration, HFE-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20857.

Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA, Room 1165-S, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Human Nutrition Information Service, USDA, Room 325A Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

National Cancer Institute, Office of Public Inquiries, NIH, Building 31, 10A-18, Bethesda, Md. 20892.

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, Office of Public Inquiries, NIH, Building 331, 4A-25, Bethesda, Md. 20892.

If you can't find a local or national resource to answer a particular nutrition question, write: National Health Information Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 1133, Washington, D.C. 20013-1133. They will refer your question to the appropriate resource.

CHAPTER 5 BE A SMART SHOPPER

Activity 42
WHERE DO WE BUY FOOD?
Take a critical look at food stores.

Activity 43
CHECK OUT THOSE FOOD ADS
Is seeing believing? Not necessarily!

Activity 44
READ ANY GOOD LABELS LATELY?
Learn about food labels and make your own.

Activity 45
READ A LABEL—STAY OUT OF THE FAT TRAP
Use labels to "degrease" your diet.

Activity 46
READ A LABEL—SPOT THE SUGAR
See how sweet cereals aren't such a sweet deal.

Activity 47
READ A LABEL—STALK OUT THE SALT
Be a sodium detective.

Activity 48
WHAT'S IN A BRAND NAME?
Uncover the differences between name brands, house brands, and generic brands.

Activity 49
HOW MUCH DOES IT REALLY COST?
Find the best buys with unit pricing.

Eating healthful foods is one thing. Buying them is completely another. Without some shopping know-how, it can be the most difficult part of eating well.

What's so hard about shopping?

First, you have to choose a place that has the kinds of foods—and prices—you like. Not so easy. If you live in the city, you may have too many choices. If you live in the country, you may have too few.

Then you have to clear your head of all those flashy advertising slogans and gimmicks. The radio said Sneedle Snaps give you more nutrition for your money, but the TV said Fleegle Flakes do. With cereal boxes practically jumping into your shopping cart, it's tough to tune into the job at hand.

And what a job! Food labels can be a goldmine of product information if you know what you'll find there. But where to begin? What does it all mean?

Relax. It doesn't have to be as difficult as all that. With a little knowledge and a lot of practice, anyone can polish up their shopping smarts—and childhood is a perfect time to begin.

ACTIVITY FORTY-TWO

WHERE DO WE BUY FOOD?

Related Subjects

Mathematics, language arts

Description

Supermarkets aren't the only places to shop. The children compare the relative advantages and disadvantages of a variety of food-selling establishments.

Purpose

To be aware of the similarities of, and differences between, places where food is sold.

Materials and Resources

"Where Do We Buy Food?" handout

Paper and pencils

Two or more of the following places to shop for food: farmers market, roadside stand, co-op store, health food store, convenience store, small grocery, supermarket

Procedure

1. Ask the children to list all the different kinds of places where people can buy food. The finished list might include those listed in the "Materials and Resources" section.

2. Questions for discussion: Do you ever go shopping by yourself? If so, where? Why? Where does your family shop for food? Is it the same place? Why do some people choose one place over another?

3. Tell the group to choose one specific type of healthful food they are likely to find in all the places in the "Where Do We Buy Food?" handout. A common fresh fruit or vegetable is probably the best choice.

4. Either individually or in groups, the children should purchase one unit (one Red Delicious apple, for example) of the chosen food from at least two of the types of shops listed. The chart asks for information on price, appearance, taste, and any additional comments.

5. When the children have gathered sufficient information, discuss the results. Which type of shop did each child like best? Why? Encourage the children to consider the price, appearance, and taste of the foods, as well as such things as convenience of location, varieties of foods available, comfort of shopping, and speed of check-out.

CHECK OUT THOSE FOOD ADS

ACTIVITY FORTY-THREE

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description
Food manufacturers spend a lot of time, energy, and money to make their product advertising just right. Consumers also should spend some time and energy with these ads—evaluating them, that is—to be sure their own money is spent wisely. This activity gives children a checklist to see how food ads measure up.

Purpose
To be aware of the techniques advertisers use to sell food products.

Materials and Resources
"Check Out Those Food Ads" handout
Pencils
Chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and marker

Procedures
1. Ask the children to think about a memorable advertisement they have seen or heard. Tell them to write down anything they can remember about the ad. Was there a catchy jingle? What was it? How was the product described?

2. Ask the children why they think they remembered the ads. Was it the pictures or the words? Explain that companies work very hard to develop advertisements that will make people want to buy their products. The companies hire professional advertising experts who put language and other elements (photos, artwork, live action) together to create certain kinds of moods or images.

3. Which words make the children want to buy a food product? For example, would "new," "fresh," or "nutritious" sound better than "old," "stale," or "bad for you"? Make a list on a chalkboard or chart of all the positive selling words the children can name.

4. What about the pictures? Does fresh-looking, brightly colored food appeal more than tired, wilted food? Do black-and-white photographs of food look as tempting as those done in color?

5. Distribute copies of the "Check Out Those Food Ads" handout. This checklist will help the children pay closer attention to the techniques used in food ads in magazines and newspapers, and on billboards, television, and radio. Have the children use the checklist to evaluate two ads—each from a different type of media.

6. Discuss the answers together. Some questions to ponder:
—Why did you choose these ads?
—Do you eat certain foods because of their ads?
—How do advertisers try to appeal to kids?
—What do you think about ads that are funny? Do they make you interested in the product, or do they just entertain you?
—Talk about some of the words advertisers use. What do they tell you about a product?
—Talk about the photos and pictures advertisers use. Do they show the product being eaten, or do they show something entirely different?
—Do you believe everything ads say? Should you?
—If an ad says a food will make you stronger or healthier, how do you know if it's true?
—What are your most/least favorite ads? Why?
—What makes a good ad? What makes a bad one?
—Which type of ad do you think is most effective—magazine, newspaper, billboard, radio, or TV?
—If you were an advertiser, what techniques would you use?

READ ANY GOOD LABELS LATELY?

ACTIVITY FORTY-FOUR

Related Subjects

Language arts

Description

The children bring an appealing food package from home to explore the information that labels provide. A "switch-'em-up" game drives the lesson home in a humorous way.

Purpose

To become familiar with some important food labeling features.

Materials and Resources

"Read Any Good Labels Lately?" handout

Any canned food with the label removed

Can opener

Packages (empty or full) of processed foods brought from home

Pencils

Crayons, colored pencils, or other drawing materials

Procedure

1. Show the children a can of food from which you have removed the label. Ask them to guess what's inside.

2. Reveal the contents with a can opener.

3. Ask the children to imagine what it would be like to shop in a store full of cans or boxes that look the same. What kind of shopping problems would this create? What kind of eating problems? What do we need to tell us something about these products? Labels.

4. Tell the children to bring in an interesting food package (empty or full) from home. You might want to have some on hand, too.

5. Tell the children to look carefully at their packages. Here are some questions for discussion:

–Does the package have a picture of the food? Is it a photograph or a drawing? Does it show the food? If so, does the food look appetizing? Do you think this is exactly the way the food inside the package looks? (Federal law says it must, or else the label must say something like, "suggested serving.")

–What is the name of the product? If you didn't know what the product was, would you know it by the name? Do you think it's a good name for the product? Why? Do you know of any products that don't have a name on the package? (Federal law requires product names to appear on food labels.)

–Find the word "ingredients" on the label. If a product has two or more ingredients, the label must list them in order, from the most to the least (based on their weight in the product). How many ingredients does your product have? Which ingredient is the most abundant? Which is the least abundant?

–How much does your product weigh? (This must be listed on all food labels.) Who has the lightest weight food? Who has the heaviest?

–Who made the product? What is the company's address? (This information is also required on every food label.)

–Some labels have a "nutrition labeling" section. Among other things, this includes information on the number and size of servings in the package, and the calories and fat each serving provides. Some nutrition labels also have information on the amount of sugar in each serving. Does your product have nutrition information? See how many of the following things you can find: number of servings, size of servings, number of calories per serving, amount of vitamins, minerals, fat, sugar, and sodium per serving.

–What else is on your label? You might find a date to tell you the last day the product should be sold or used. You probably will find a Universal Product Code (UPC)–the numbered lines and spaces that

now take the place of prices on many grocery package labels. (When adding up a customer's purchases, the checker moves each UPC symbol across a beam of light that "reads" the code and sends it to a computer. The computer translates the code into the product name and price, both of which appear on the cash register screen and on the customer's receipt.) Tips for storage and preparation may also appear.

6. Distribute copies of the "Read Any Good Labels Lately?" handout. This is a blank "label" with spaces to fill in some standard labeling features: product name, product weight, list of ingredients, and manufacturer's name and address. There is also room for additional label information.

7. Each child begins completing these labels by copying the product name from the package he or she brought in.

8. Each child then passes the package in a designated direction to the next child (whether on the right or left, or forward or backward), and copies the product weight of the new package onto the handout label.

9. The children pass the packages again, this time to copy the first five ingredients (or, if the product has five or fewer, all the ingredients); and again, to copy the manufacturer's name and adress.

10. On the final pass, the children look for one additional piece of information on the package label–such as storage instructions or number of calories per serving–and write that down.

11. The children now have some pretty crazy, mixed-up labels! Tell them to think about the ingredients and product name and to imagine how such a food would look. The last step is to draw a picture of the product on the front of the handout label.

12. Encourage the children to share and describe their one-of-a-kind food labels. Would they expect to find these products at the supermarket?

Older Kids Can Also . . .

–Learn more about nutrition labeling. What information is provided? What is a U.S. RDA? Do all nutrition labels provide the same information? Find examples of informative nutrition labels on breakfast cereals, snack foods, and candy bars.

–Critique food labels. If only three things could be provided on a label, which would you choose? If you were to design an improved food label, what would it look like?

READ A LABEL—STAY OUT OF THE FAT TRAP

ACTIVITY FORTY-FIVE

Related subject:

Language arts

Description

The children learn about the different types of fats, how fats are listed on product labels, and how to use this information to stay out of the "fat trap."

Purpose

To become aware of the ways fats are listed on product labels.

Materials and Resources

"Read a Label–Stay Out of the Fat Trap" handout
Pencils
Food containers at the children's homes
Olive oil
Butter

Procedure

1. Tell the children that it's a good idea to cut back on all kinds of fats, but certain fats are more healthful than others. Do they know which fats are which?

2. Explain that:

–The least harmful fats are unsaturated fats. These generally come from vegetables or fish, and they tend to remain in a liquid form at room temperature. Show the children olive oil, which is a good example of an unsaturated fat.

–Saturated fats, on the other hand, most often come from animals (meat, poultry, dairy products) and these fats usually are solid at room temperature. Show the children butter, a good example of a saturated fat. Coconut oil and palm oil are also high in saturated fats.
–Cholesterol is a fatty substance found only in animal fats. Egg yolks have a lot of cholesterol.

3. Tell the children that the saturated fats and cholesterol in food raise the cholesterol content of your blood. If there is too much cholesterol there, it can build up in your arteries and clog them, increasing your risk of heart disease. (Smoking, high blood pressure, obesity, and inactivity also increase the risk.) (See Activity 10, Chapter 2, for a concrete demonstration of fats in the arteries, and Activities 11 and 12 in that chapter for more information about fats.)

4. Explain that it pays to be aware of the fats in your diet. If you eat mostly fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, beans, very lean meat, fish (not fried), and poultry without skin, you're doing very well. But you can do even better if you pay attention to product labels, which can give you a lot of fat facts.

5. Distribute copies of the "Read a Label–Stay Out of the Fat Trap" handout. The handout has clues for using labels to learn the types of fats different foods have. Explain that the handout can help the children spot saturated and unsaturated fats on product labels, but not cholesterol, which in most cases is not identified on labels.

6. Have the children use the handout in their homes to find five examples of foods with saturated fats (to put into the fat trap) and five with unsaturated fats (to put outside the fat trap).

7. When the children have completed the activity, have them share the results with each other. Which types of fat did they find the most of? If there were more saturated fats than unsaturated fats, how can the children help get their families out of the "fat trap"?

Older Kids Can Also . . .

–Find foods with nutrition labels and compute the percentage of fat in one serving. Here's how: Multiply the number of grams of fat per serving by 9 (the number of calories of fat in a gram). Divide the answer by the number of calories in one serving. The answer, times 100, is the percentage of calories from fat per serving.

READ A LABEL—SPOT THE SUGAR

ACTIVITY FORTY-SIX

Related subjects

Language arts

Description

The children examine cereal boxes to learn how to understand and use sugar information on product labels. A naturally sweet, homemade cereal recipe is included.

Purpose

To become aware of the various names sugar goes by in the ingredient listing.

Materials and Resources

Chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and marker
Empty cereal boxes from home
Highlighting markers (pens with light-colored transparent ink)
Ingredients and equipment for cereal recipe included with this activity (optional)

Procedure

1. Is sugar always called sugar? What other names does it go by? List all the names the children can think of. (See Activities 13, 14, and 15 in Chapter 2 for more sugar activities.)

2. Write these names for all to see: sugar, brown sugar, raw sugar, honey, maple syrup, molasses, corn syrup, high fructose

corn syrup, corn sweetener, natural sweeteners, sucrose, fructose, maltose, lactose, invert sugar, dextrose, malt. These are the names sugar usually goes by on product labels.

3. Ask the children to bring cereal boxes from home; supply some yourself for those without.

4. Have the children look for the sugar names on the labels, accentuate them with the highlighting markers, and read them aloud.

5. Discuss: How many types of sugar does each brand contain? Compare this number with the number of other ingredients in each food. Does a sugar name show up in the first three ingredients of any brand? Ingredients are listed in descending order of predominance by weight (most to least), so if the sugary ingredients are up front—especially first—the cereal most likely has lots of sugar.

6. Who has the cereal box with the most sugar names? Who has the box with the least? Do any boxes have no sugar names at all? Have the children vote on their favorite cereal. How do they feel about the sugar content of the winner? How do they feel about cereals loaded down with sugar? How do these products differ from candy?

7. Make a nutritious, low-sugar cereal together. This adaptation of Jane Brody's "Hearty Oatmeal" (from *Jane Brody's Nutrition Book*, W.W. Norton and Company, 1981) is low in salt, has no added sugar, and contains whole grains and fresh fruit.

Older Kids Can Also:

—Calculate the percentage of sugar in one serving of each cereal. Offer a clue until the children need more help: there are 28 grams to an ounce.

Here's how to find the answer:

The "carbohydrates information" lists the number of grams of sugar in each one-ounce serving. Divide that number by 28. Thus, if "Sweet and Sticky" cereal offers 14 grams of sugar per serving, 14÷28=0.50. Multiply 0.50 by 100, and you learn that the sweet and sticky stuff is a whopping 50 percent sugar.

Follow the same steps to compute the percentage of starch per serving.

—Examine the carbohydrate information on cereal labels. How many grams of "starch and related carbohydrates" does one ounce of cereal contain? How much "sucrose and other sugars?" How much dietary fiber? What is the total weight of carbohydrates in each cereal? What does it mean if there is more sugar than starch and fiber? (Ideally, the starch and dietary fiber should comprise the bulk of the carbohydrates in a cereal.)

Oaty-Meal

Makes four breakfast-size servings

Equipment

Knife
Cutting board
Hotplate
Saucepan
Bowls
Spoons

Ingredients

4 cups skim milk
2 cups oats (not instant)
¼ cup raisins or chopped dates
2 unpeeled apples, cut in small chunks
Cinnamon

Directions

Mix the first four ingredients together in a saucepan.

Bring to a boil.

Cover and simmer for about 10 minutes or until the oatmeal reaches the desired consistency. Stir often!

Sprinkle with cinnamon and serve.

READ A LABEL—STALK OUT THE SALT

ACTIVITY FORTY-SEVEN

Related subjects

Language arts

Description

The best way to learn about the sodium content of processed foods is to stalk it out

on the label. This activity can help the children learn to do just that using ingredient and nutrition labeling information.

Purpose

To become aware of the sodium information on product labels.

Materials and Resources

"Read a Label–Stalk Out the Salt" handout
Pencils
Grocery store
Processed food label(s) with sodium information in the nutrition section

Procedure

1. Tell the children that sodium is a master of disguises. Although most of the sodium we consume comes from salt, sodium occurs in many foods that don't taste salty. Furthermore, this mineral often goes by other names. (For more salt activities, see Activities 16, 17, and 18 in Chapter 2.)

2. Ask the children if they know any other food ingredients that contain sodium. Here are some; others will have "sodium" or "soda" in their names:
   baking powder
   baking soda
   monosodium glutamate (MSG)
   soy isolates
   sodium nitrite
   sodium ascorbate
   sodium saccharin

3. Show the children the sample food labels. Explain that all processed foods list their ingredients in descending order of predominance–from most to least. All forms of sodium can be found in the ingredients listing. Some foods also list how much sodium each serving contains. When this information is included, it appears on the nutrition label. (Products with less than 140 milligrams per serving are no great problem, but those with 140 milligrams or more per serving account for the high sodium content of most diets.)

4. Explain that eating too much sodium may lead to high blood pressure (hypertension), which can result in heart attacks, strokes, and kidney problems.

5. Distribute copies of the "Read a Label–Stalk Out the Salt" handout. Tell the children they will be "salt detectives" at the grocery store, using the clues on the handout to search out hidden sodium and salt. Visit the store as a group, or have the children go individually. If a store visit is not possible for some children, have them do the activity in the home or school kitchen.

6. When the children have completed their "stalking," discuss the results in class.
–Suspect A is sodium nitrite, a preservative which is used in many processed meats.
–Suspect B is sodium benzoate, another preservative.
–Suspect C is monosodium glutamate (MSG), a flavoring added to many canned soups and frozen meat products. It is also sold as a seasoning for use with meat, poultry, seafood, soup, sauces, and vegetables.

7. Ask the children if they encountered any problems in their search. Was it easy to find enough examples?

Older Kids Can Also . . .

–Take a closer look at sodium information on nutrition labels. Tell them that for every product they find that has this information, they should record the number of milligrams per serving and classify the sodium content as "okay" or "high."
–Look for different brands of the same food (canned green beans, for example) and, using nutrition labeling information, compare the sodium contents. How easy is it to find low-sodium brands? How do low-sodium brands compare in cost to the higher sodium varieties?

WHAT'S IN A BRAND NAME?

ACTIVITY FORTY-EIGHT

Related Subjects
Mathematics

Description
Would a pea by any other name taste as sweet? The children learn the answer to this or similar questions by comparing the price, appearance, taste, and texture of name brands, house brands, and generic brands of food.

Purpose
To experience the similarities of, and differences between, name brand, house brand, and generic brand foods.

Materials and Resources
One package each of a name brand, house brand, and generic brand of the same type of food (such as peas)
Supermarket

Procedure
1. Show the children three different containers of the same type of food—one a "name brand" (it has a nationally advertised brand name), one a "house brand" (it has the supermarket's own brand on the label), and one a "generic brand" (it has no brand name, only the name of the product).

NOTE: Generic foods, once quite popular, are no longer widely available in many areas. If you can't find a sample package, use the scarcity of generic foods as a topic for discussion.

2. Ask the children to vote on the one that most appeals to them.

3. Once the votes are tallied, ask the children to explain their choices. If they voted for the name brand product, was it because of the attractive photograph on the label? Did they choose that product because they recognized the company's name? If they chose the house brand, did they do so because that's where their family shops? Why did they choose the generic brand?

4. Tell the children that nationally advertised brands are generally the most expensive. Ask the children why they think that is. (Advertising is expensive, and the manufacturers pass those costs on to the consumer.)

5. Tell the children that house brand foods often are exactly the same products as the name brands and made by the same manufacturer. The only difference is the way they are packaged and advertised: they don't look as fancy as nationally advertised brands, and they aren't advertised as heavily; therefore, they aren't as expensive.

Sometimes, however, the house brands are made of less attractive or lower quality ingredients (even if manufactured by the national brand company). And sometimes house brands are even *better* than the national brands.

Ask the children if they would pay more for a product just because it had a more "expensive" label. (You might want to relate this issue to clothing. Ask the children to name the most popular brands of clothing for kids their age. Is the clothing more expensive than less popular brands? Is it better? If not, why do people buy the more popular brand names?)

6. Tell the children that generic brand foods are wrapped in plain black-and-white labels that have no brand names. They are the least expensive type of brand, although they are not as widely available as the other two.

7. Tell the children that, in general, name brands offer the highest quality, house brands offer the second highest quality, and generics come in last. Explain, however, that quality may mean the color and texture of the food and the size of the pieces. It has little to do with nutrition. The nutritional attributes of a can of peas, for example, will usually be approximately

the same whether it's a name brand, house brand, or generic brand.

8. Let the children choose several types of food, such as pasta, spaghetti sauce, canned corn, and apple juice. Have them go to a supermarket and look for the name brand, house brand, and generic versions of these foods. Tell the children to record the prices of these products, making certain they are similarly sized.

9. Have the children determine the best buys for these foods by comparing the prices. Ask such questions as: How much more expensive is the name brand than the house brand? How much more expensive is the house brand than the generic brand?

10. You may also want to have the children sample the contents of the various brands of foods, and discuss which have the best taste, color, and texture, and, if appropriate, which have the most uniformly sized pieces.

Older Kids Can Also:

–Use their imaginations to create a new processed product and draw three different labels: one for a name-brand version of the product, one for a house-brand version, and one for a generic brand.

HOW MUCH DOES IT REALLY COST?

ACTIVITY FORTY-NINE

Related Subjects

Mathematics

Description

The children learn what unit pricing is and how to use it. A handout challenges them to find the best buys.

Purpose

To understand the concept of unit pricing.

Materials and Resources

"How Much Does It Really Cost?" handout

Pencils

Procedure

1. Tell the children that unit pricing is a tool for comparing the prices of supermarket products. In other words, instead of looking at the prices of the food items themselves, you look at the prices of the "units."

2. Ask the children if they have ever seen or used unit pricing. Where is unit pricing displayed? (on special shelf stickers, usually below each product)

3. Ask the children what they think the units might be. (fluid ounces, ounces, pounds, pints, quarts, gallons) Which units measure solid foods, such as meats, fresh vegetables, canned goods, cereals, and frozen foods? (ounces, pounds) Which units measure liquids, such as milk and juice? (fluid ounces, pints, quarts, gallons)

4. Distribute copies of the "How Much Does It Really Cost?" handout. Discuss each element of the sample unit price tag. Then, have the children try to find the better buy in each example. Discuss the results. (A and C are the better buys.)

5. Tell the children that the key to using unit pricing to save money is to compare similar items. For example, comparing the costs of chicken and frozen orange juice wouldn't do you much good, but comparing the costs of two brands of frozen orange juice would give you some important pricing information.

6. Ask the children to name some other examples of unit pricing comparisons that could help save money (comparing two or more different brands of the same product, such as frozen green beans; or comparing two or more versions of similar products–for example, bottled orange juice, bottled apple juice, and bottled grape juice).

WHERE DO WE BUY FOOD?

	Cost (per item)	Appearance (Best/OK/Bad)	Taste (Best/OK/Bad)
Farmers market			
Roadside stand			
Co-op store			
Health food store			
Convenience store			
Small grocery			
Supermarket			

Other comments:

_____

_____

CHECK OUT THOSE FOOD ADS

Food ads can be found in many places, including magazines, newspapers, billboards, radio, and television. Choose two of these places, and take a close look–or listen–at one ad from each. Then complete this checklist.

Ad #1
What food is being advertised? _____
What type of ad is it? Circle one:
magazine newspaper billboard radio television

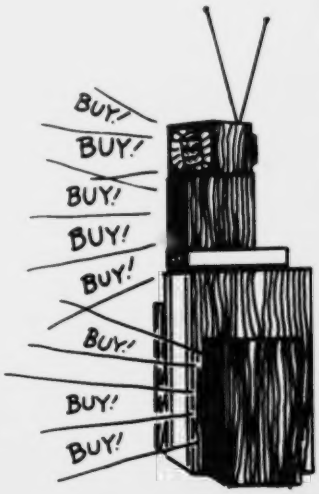
Ad #2
What food is being advertised? _____
What type of ad is it? Circle one:
magazine newspaper billboard radio television

Answer "yes" or "no," and add any comments you wish to make.

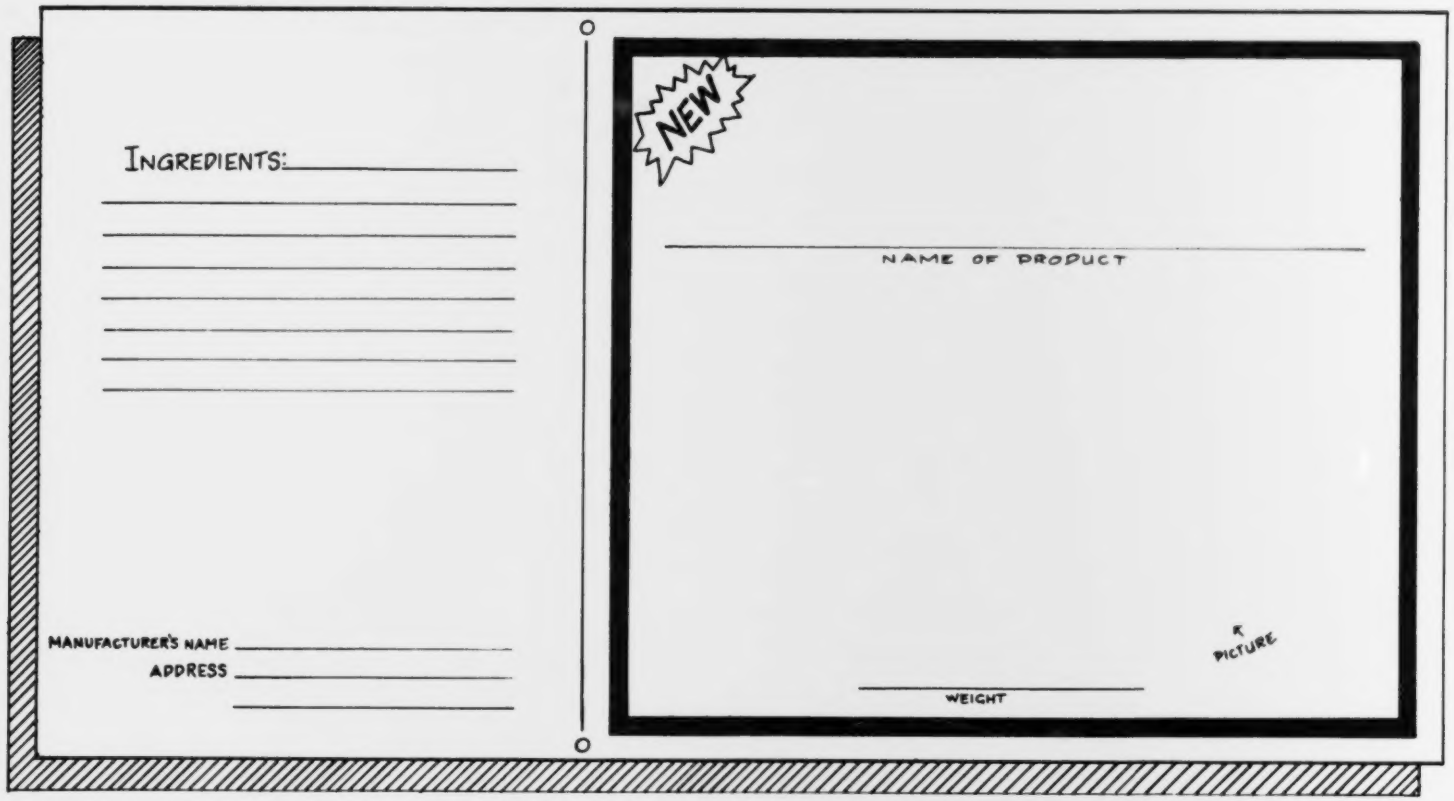
	Ad #1	Ad #2
Have you ever tried this product?		
Do you like the ad?		
Does the ad make you want to try the product? Why?		
Does the ad have young people in it?		
Do you think the ad wants youngsters to try the product?		
Is the ad funny?		
Does the ad say anything about health? If so, write what it says here.		

Ad #1: _____

Ad #2: _____

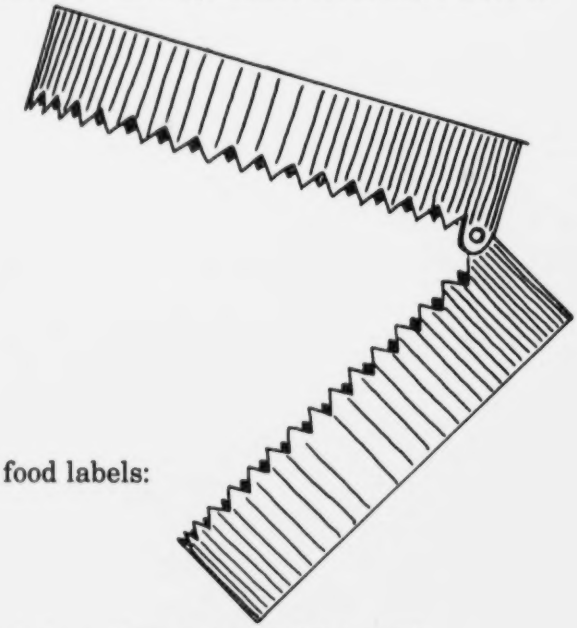


READ ANY GOOD LABELS LATELY?



READ A LABEL—STAY OUT OF THE FAT TRAP

Do you eat too much saturated fat? This is the worst kind of fat for your body. Well, watch your step. You might fall into the fat trap! These foods have a lot of saturated fats:



- Cheeses
- Ice cream
- Butter
- Lard
- Vegetable shortening
- Whole milk
- Eggs
- Meats
- Chicken with skin
- Coconut
- Chocolate
- Pastries
- Cream

And beware of these saturated fats on food labels:

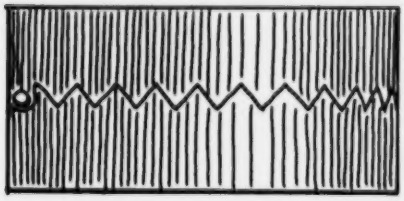
- Coconut oil
- Coconut
- Palm oil or palm kernel oil
- Lard

Another way to stay out of the fat trap is to replace saturated fats with unsaturated fats. These foods have them:

- Nuts
- Fish
- Margarine

Look for these unsaturated fats on food labels:

- Canola oil
- Corn oil
- Cottonseed oil
- Olive oil
- Safflower oil
- Sesame oil
- Soy oil
- Sunflower oil
- Margarine



The *best* way to avoid the fat trap is to eat foods that have little of *any* kind of fat.

READ A LABEL— STALK OUT THE SALT

Sodium is hiding in every corner of the grocery store. Sometimes sodium is called salt, but it goes by many other names. Even when it is called salt, it can show up in some surprising places. Use these clues to stalk out the salt:

1. Suspect A is found in the processed meats section. His initials are S.N.

What's his name? _____

List three foods that he calls home.

_____ _____ _____.

2. Suspect B lurks in foods with a high acid content, such as fruit juices, carbonated drinks, pickles, and salad dressings. Her initials are S.B. Name her. Write the names of three products where she hangs out.

_____ _____ _____.

3. Suspect C's name has two words. Sometimes people call him by three initials—MSG. Can you find him on some canned soups or frozen meat products?

His name is: _____

He can be found in:

_____ _____ _____.

HOW MUCH DOES IT REALLY COST?

This is a sample of a shelf tag that provides unit pricing:

YOU PAY $1.25	UNIT PRICE $0.25 PER OUNCE
5 OZ. EAT 'EM UP	

SIZE OF PACKAGE ↑ PRODUCT NAME ↑

Find the best buys in the following two examples:

A

YOU PAY $2.40	UNIT PRICE $1.20 PER POUND
2 LB. CRUNCHALOTS	

B

YOU PAY $2.00	UNIT PRICE $1.50 PER POUND
20 OZ. WOWIE ZOWIES	

Which is the better buy, A or B?

C

YOU PAY $1.50	UNIT PRICE $0.75 PER PINT
2 PINTS YUMMY STUFF	

D

YOU PAY $1.50	UNIT PRICE $1.50 PER PINT
1 PINT SIP'N'DRIP	

Which is the better buy, C or D?

NIBBLES

Store of My Dreams....

Even the best stores leave something to be desired. Let the class brainstorm the perfect food store, where only the most healthful–and delicious–foods are sold. What would the store look like? What foods would be sold there? Would the store have special features, like free samples, a restaurant, or food-related games? The children can draw pictures or murals of the store, or even create mini-stores in shoeboxes.

Let's Go Shopping

Do this activity on the day the newspaper carries food ads. Let each child (or small group of children) imagine they have $5 to spend at the supermarket. Which foods are on sale? Which coupons look worthwhile? See who can come up with the most healthful foods for the money.

Ad-Libbing

Clip a variety of "junk food" ads from magazines. Encourage the children to create similar ads with one important difference–instead of trying to sell "junk foods," they should try to sell healthful ones. Kids with a dramatic flair may like to try the same thing with radio or TV ads.

Good Reads

Good labels make for good reading. Start a collection of the most informative labels the children can find. Mount them like stamps or photos in a scrapbook, or make them into a collage.

Create Some "Yukkkk!" Foods

If you tasted the saltiest food in the world, you might say "yukkkk!" Think of a name for that food, and list all its salty ingredients (for instance, it might be made of salt, pickles, sodium carbonate, soy sauce, and monosodium glutamate–and nothing else. Yukkkk!). Do the same with the fattiest food and the sweetest food in the world.

TAKE-HOME TIPS

_____ [student's name] is learning to be a smart food shopper. Here are some ways you can learn to shop better–together!

• Make your next shopping trip a label-reading adventure. Put your heads together and look for fat, sugar, and salt on the grocery shelves:

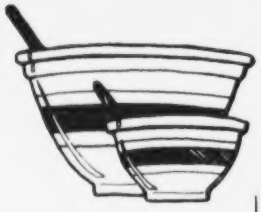
–Be on the fat alert! Saturated fats are the worst kind for your arteries and heart. Avoid them by looking for these names on labels: coconut oil, palm kernel oil, palm oil, and lard. Also, any product with butter, shortening, or beef tallow has saturated fat.

You don't even have to look on the label to know that cheese, ice cream, whole milk, eggs, meat, chicken with the skin, and chocolate have plenty of saturated fat. Go easy on them.

–If you're in the breakfast-food aisle, you're in candyland. Most kids' cereals have sugar; many adult cereals have it, too. And don't forget the breakfast pastries! If a label lists several of these sugary ingredients–and especially if they're the first, second, or third in the list–keep looking for a more healthful product:

sugar
brown sugar
raw sugar
fructose
corn syrup
high-fructose corn syrup
corn sweetener
maltose
sucrose
dextrose
malt
invert sugar
honey
molasses
maple syrup

–When you pick up your usual brand of canned beans or other canned vegetables, check first to see if it contains salt or sodium (most sodium ingredients have the word "sodium" right in the name). Is there another brand that doesn't? How about trying fresh or frozen for a change?



COOK IT TOGETHER

Convenience foods may be convenient, but did you know they often cost more than foods you make yourself? Many also contain ingredients you wouldn't add if you had the choice. In fact, it's just as easy to make many of your own "convenience foods" in your own kitchen.

Take pancakes, for example. This recipe (adapted from Corn Griddle Cakes in *Jane Brody's Good Food Book*, published by W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1985) is easy as pie—plus it's a whole lot more interesting than the kind you get in a box!

These pancakes have enough flavor to stand on their own, but if you do crave some sweetness, top them with apple sauce, apple butter (you can get it without added sugar), or fresh fruit.

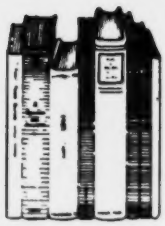
CORNY CAKES

Makes about 10 pancakes

Dry ingredients
⅔ cup all-purpose flour
⅓ cup whole-wheat flour
1 tablespoon sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon cinnamon

Wet ingredients
¾ cup skim or low-fat milk or buttermilk
1 egg
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1⅓ cups corn kernels (frozen, canned, or fresh cooked)

1. Stir together the dry ingredients in a medium bowl.
2. In another bowl, whisk together the milk, egg, and oil. Stir in the corn.
3. Add the wet ingredients to the dry, mixing them just to blend. Don't worry about the lumps.
4. For each pancake, spread ¼ cup of batter on a hot, greased griddle. Cook the pancakes over moderate heat until they are golden brown on the bottom and the tops begin to bubble. Flip the cakes over. Cook until golden brown.



RESOURCES

Books for teachers and parents

Cut Your Grocery Bills in Half, Barbara Salsbury. Acropolis Books (Washington), 1983.

Pure & Simple, Marian Burros. William Morrow and Company, Inc. (New York), 1978.

Supermarket Handbook, Nikki and David Goldbeck. New American Library (New York), 1973.

Brochures for children and adults

The Food Marketing Institute offers single, free copies of several shopping publications. Recent titles include "Money Saving Shopping Tips," "Label Logic," and "Sodium Sense." For a list, write: FMI, 1750 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

You can also order free or inexpensive brochures from the federal government:
–For a list of titles on food labeling (and other consumer topics), write: Food and Drug Administration, HFW-40, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20857.
–For a list of titles on the labeling of meat and poultry products, write: Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 1165-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

CHAPTER 6

PASS THE GOOD FOOD WORD

Activity 50
GOSSIP ABOUT GOOD FOOD
Play a listening game to get an earful about good foods.

Activity 51
GUESS WHO'S COMING TO LUNCH?
Spread the word about nutrition with a nutritious spread for parents.

Activity 52
PALATE-PLEASING PUPPETS
Let puppets tell the glories of choosing your own healthful diet.

Activity 53
LET'S HELP OUR NEIGHBORS
Help others eat as well as you know how.

Activity 54
HOW DOES YOUR HEALTH FAIR?
Stage a health fair to share some nutrition knowledge.

Activity 55
FOOD FUN FOR SCHOOL FUNDS
Is candy really so dandy for raising money for school?

Activity 56
JOIN THE HEALTHFUL FOOD HALL OF FAME
Get your just reward for eating, thinking, and being healthy!

At this point, the children know a lot about food. They know what not to eat. More important, they know what to eat—and they like it! They even know how to buy food.

What's the next step? To tell the world about it!

Your students no doubt are proud of their new-found nutrition knowledge. They know they'll grow up healthier and stronger because of it, and get more enjoyment out of every meal.

Sharing these special gifts with others is the point of the activities in this final chapter. It will make the children feel good about themselves and their own eating habits. Plus, it just may help get other people—young and old—onto a healthier track.

So, pass it on—good food is the word!

ACTIVITY FIFTY

GOSSIP ABOUT GOOD FOOD

Related Subjects

Language arts

Description

What good is gossip? When the subject is nutrition, it's a very worthwhile pursuit! In this activity, the children play a gossip game with the names and facts of some healthful foods. Two recipes are included.

Purpose

To increase awareness of healthful foods and beverages.

Materials and Resources

Ingredients and equipment for recipes included with this activity (optional)

Procedure

1. "Gossip" is a game that challenges children's listening skills. This version of "gossip," "good food gossip," introduces some healthful foods and beverages with which the children may not be familiar. And, to make the game more challenging, it includes some nutrition facts. Here are some gossip messages to get the game started:

Buttermilk doesn't have butter. It's low in fat.

Plain low-fat yogurt makes a great low-calorie treat mixed with fruit.

Ice milk contains less than half the fat of ice cream.

Farmer cheese—you don't have to be a farmer to like this low-fat cheese.

Couscous (pronounced "koose-koose") is a starchy Middle Eastern food made from wheat.

Buckwheat is a delicious, nutritious fruit that looks and tastes like wheat.

Chickpeas aren't chicken food; they're beans packed with starch and fiber.

Bean sprouts are low-calorie, nutritious foods you can grow yourself.

Zucchinis are low-calorie vegetables that come in several sizes and colors.

Orzo is a starchy, Greek noodle that looks like rice.

2. Have the children sit in a large circle. Tell them you will whisper a nutritious food and a related nutrition fact into someone's ear. That child, in turn, whispers what he or she has heard into the ear of a neighbor (to the left or right; you may want to alter the instruction each time). Each child whispers to the next whatever he or she has heard. The last child to hear the message says it aloud.

Chances are that somewhere along the way, the message will have been garbled. That's the fun of the game! (If the messages are not getting garbled, use two or more names or nutrition facts at a time.)

3. After each round, tell the children the answer. Have they ever tasted the food? Do they know any more nutrition facts about it?

4. Have a tasting party of some lesser known nutritious foods and beverages. These recipes incorporate buttermilk and couscous:

YUMMY CALCIUM-MY

This good-for-you drink, adapted from a Strawberry Buttermilk Cooler in *Laurel's Kitchen* (by Robertson, Flinders, and Godfrey, published by Nilgiri Press, 1976), tastes a lot richer than it is.

Makes 3 servings

Equipment
Knife
Blender

Ingredients
2 cups cold buttermilk
1 large, ripe banana
Handful of berries (optional)
1 t. vanilla

Directions
Blend and drink!

COUSCOUS SALAD

Equipment
Hotplate
Saucepan
Fork (for fluffing couscous)
Knife
Cutting board
Bowl

Ingredients
Pre-steamed couscous—it comes dry in a box; all you have to do is add it to boiling water, cover the pot, remove it from the heat, and let it stand for five minutes (follow package directions)
Raw vegetables
Salad dressing (try oil and vinegar with herbs, or just plain lemon with pepper)

Directions
Prepare couscous according to package directions.

Cut up some favorite raw vegetables and put them in a bowl.

Pour a thin layer of salad dressing over the vegetables.

Cover the bowl with foil or plastic wrap.

When the couscous is cool, add the vegetables and dressing.

Mix well.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO LUNCH?

ACTIVITY FIFTY-ONE

Related Subjects
Creative writing, art

Description
Why keep all that good-food knowledge to themselves? The children invite their parents or other adults to a classroom lunch featuring a sandwich bar and fresh fruit. A recipe for a sandwich filling is included.

Purpose
To reinforce the principles of good nutrition and spread the good word to others.

Materials and Resources
Ingredients and equipment for recipe included with this activity (optional)
Lunch foods, beverages, and equipment (to be determined by the children)

Procedures
1. Tell the children they will plan and host a healthful lunch for their parents or other adult guests. The lunch will be a serve-yourself buffet, featuring a sandwich bar and fresh fruit for dessert.

2. Ask the children to describe the characteristics of a healthful lunch (low in fat, refined sugar, and salt; high in starch and fiber). What are some lunch foods that fit the bill?
—Low in fat: chicken or turkey without the skin, tuna packed in water, skim or low-fat milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese
—Low in sugar: fresh fruits, desserts made with little sugar
—Low in salt: fresh (unprocessed) foods, foods seasoned with herbs instead of salt
—High in starch and fiber: fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain crackers and breads, legumes

3. Ask the children to volunteer to serve on one of the following committees:
—Menu planning—deciding which foods and beverages will be served, and collecting simple recipes to be made in the classroom or at some children's homes (it may be a good idea to recruit some willing parents to assist these children with their task, or to work very closely with them yourself to ensure their plans are feasible); ensuring that the foods are purchased, prepared, and arranged for the lunch
—Invitations—writing and designing the invitations to the lunch
—Decorating—making signs, posters, placemats, or other decorations to make

the occasion more festive
–Supplies–working closely with the menu planning group to determine the types and amounts of utensils and other equipment needed for the lunch; planning the room set-up
–Hosting–working with the menu planning and supplies committees to prepare the room; making sure the guests are greeted

4. Plan to have all the children assist in the post-luncheon cleanup.

5. Tell the menu committee to meet first and to present its decisions to the other children. This will give the committees responsible for invitations, decorating, supplies, and hosting the background information they need to do their work.

TEMPTING TUNA

Makes about four servings

Equipment
Can opener
Spoon
Knife
Cutting board
Medium bowl

Ingredients
One 7-ounce can tuna packed in water, drained
Approximately 2-4 tablespoons plain low-fat yogurt
Fresh-ground black pepper
Juice from ¼ lemon
1 small carrot, diced
1 small stalk celery, diced

Directions
Add enough yogurt to moisten tuna.
Stir in chopped carrots and celery.
Season with lemon juice and pepper, to taste.

ACTIVITY FIFTY-TWO

PALATE-PLEASING PUPPETS

Related Subjects
Language arts, creative writing, drama, art

Description
The children present a puppet show that emphasizes the rewards of choosing your own healthful diet. A sample puppet show script is included, along with suggestions for making the puppets and props.

Purpose
To appreciate the benefits of choosing your own healthful diet.

Materials and Resources
"Chews Your Own Foods" sample script
Orange or grapefruit
Loaf of whole-grain bread
Assortment of arts and crafts materials for making the puppets and props

Procedure
1. Explain that the children will present a puppet show that emphasizes the importance of learning to make your own healthful food choices.

2. Do the children have some say in what they eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? Do they wish they had more opportunities to make these decisions? Explain that while they are young and under their parents' care, many of their eating decisions will be made for them. However, they are never too young to learn how to make their own food choices, because as they grow older and more independent, they will have to make more and more decisions for themselves.

3. Distribute copies of the sample script "Chews Your Own Foods." Read through the script with the children. Encourage the children (as a group) to make any changes that will make the script more meaningful to them. (They may want to write their own.)

4. Assign the various tasks of making the puppets, making the props, learning the parts, and, if other children will be invited, creating invitations.

5. Here are some suggestions for the puppets and props:
Puppets–Use a real orange or grapefruit for Mr. Citrus, and a real loaf of bread for Bread Head. Facial features can be made from legumes or construction

paper (pasted or taped on), dried fruits (attached with toothpicks), or felt-tip markers or other arts and crafts supplies.

For the people puppets, use napkin-stuffed lunchbags or construction paper cut-outs. Decorate with arts and crafts supplies, and mount on sticks or strips of heavy cardboard. Or, make puppets out of socks, balloons, or empty boxes or cans.

Props—To carry out the food theme, use celery, broccoli, and greens to represent trees, bushes, and grass. Try to incorporate foods and their packages into other parts of the background.

Surround the stage with healthful foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, boxes of whole-grain cereals, and bowls of different colored legumes.

6. Present the show to other children—especially younger ones. Serve light, healthful snacks and beverages.

LET'S HELP OUR NEIGHBORS

ACTIVITY FIFTY-THREE

Related Subjects

Social studies

Description

The children plan and prepare food packages for special people in the community.

Purpose

To use knowledge of good nutrition to help others.

Materials and Resources

Community facility that could use help in feeding its clients
Staff member and/or client of the facility
Dietitian, nutritionist, or medical professional or educator who can discuss the special nutritional needs or desires of the clients
Baskets or other containers
A variety of foods appropriate to people with special nutritional needs

Procedure

1. Contact a local nursing home, residential hospital, shelter for the homeless, or other community facility to inquire if food packages are needed and welcomed.

2. When you have chosen a facility, invite one of its staff members and/or one of its clients and, if possible, a dietitian, nutritionist, or medical professional or educator to tell the children the nutritional needs or desires of the particular group you will be serving.

3. With the visitor's help, prepare a list of appropriate foods for the baskets. Here are some suggested items for a gift to elderly persons:

Fresh fruit (for fiber and vitamins)
Fresh vegetables (for fiber, vitamins, and minerals)
Canned sardines (for calcium)
Canned salmon (for calcium)
Baby foods (for ease of chewing)
Whole wheat bread (for fiber and vitamins)

4. Involve parents, other community members, and local businesses in purchasing or donating food items for the baskets. Here's one novel and healthful way the children can help out (this is especially appropriate when the basket recipients will be the community's homeless and hungry): The children give up one or more "junk foods"; the money they would otherwise spend daily or weekly for the snacks goes instead to a fund for the baskets.

5. Assemble and deliver the baskets.

HOW DOES YOUR HEALTH FAIR?

ACTIVITY FIFTY-FOUR

Related Subjects

Language arts, creative writing, mathematics, social studies, art, music, fitness

Description

Do food and fun go together? Yes! The children plan and present a health fair to share what they've learned about good nutrition. Suggestions for booths, games, and activities are included.

Purpose

To share the principles of good nutrition with other children and adults.

Materials and Resources

Chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and marker
Materials for the fair (to be determined by the children)
Local health and nutrition professionals
Representatives of non-profit health and nutrition organizations

Procedure

1. Before launching this activity, be sure to secure a location and set a date for the fair. You also may want to seek the support of local businesses to help cover costs. Be sure to allow enough lead time for the children to plan the fair.

2. Ask the children to name some important nutrition and health hints they think other people should know, too. (Some examples are: eat fewer sugary foods; get plenty of exercise; brush your teeth, especially after meals.) List the answers on a chalkboard or chart.

3. Tell the children they will work together to plan and present a health fair for the school or community. Their list of nutrition and health hints will serve as the basis for the booths, games, and activities they develop.

4. Let the children work individually or in small groups to plan activities related to the hints.

5. Encourage the children to consider consulting and including some important resources in the school and community, such as the school nurse; local doctors, nurses, and dentists; and representatives from local hospitals, health clinics, and such health associations as the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association, and the American Cancer Society.

6. Have the children write a press release about the fair and distribute it to the local media (press releases tell who, what, when, where, why, and how). The children can also make posters to alert local residents to the event.

7. Here are some suggested activities:
–Have a variation on "pin the tail on the donkey": "drop the fruit in the bowl." The prize for getting the fruit in the bowl? A piece of fresh fruit.
–Set up a booth to accept donations (money or food) for the community's needy people. Or, have a bake sale (with low-sugar, low-fat baked goods) and donate the proceeds to a local good cause.
–Designate areas for fitness activities. One spot could feature jump-rope lessons; another, music for dancing; and another, an aerobics video. Or, try some sports clinics or demonstrations.
–Test fair-goers' label reading skills with a quiz at a "Label Lovers" booth. Use real labels.
–Hold a corn shucking contest, and cook and serve the shucked ears to everyone.
–Fair food doesn't have to be cotton candy. Serve unbuttered popcorn (with herbs, not salt), fresh fruit, juices, baked sweet potatoes, or any other healthful foods or beverages.
–Let your community resource people set up booths, distribute publications, and

answer questions. Encourage them to bring some of the tools of their trade (dentists bring floss, toothbrushes, and toothpaste for demonstrations; doctors bring blood pressure cuffs).
–Mount lots of blank paper on a wall or spread it on the ground. Give everyone some paints to use, and let them create a mural that illustrates healthful living.
–Invite local cooks to give cooking demonstrations.
–Let fair-goers try to knock over "junk food" containers with bean bags.

ACTIVITY FIFTY-FIVE

FOOD FUN FOR SCHOOL FUNDS

Related Subjects
Mathematics

Description
Does your school sell candy bars to raise money? What does this say about the school's commitment to good nutrition? And what does it do to your neighbors' diets? This activity encourages the children to think of some alternative foods to sell, and some ways to work with parents and teachers to see these changes through.

Purpose
To use knowledge of nutrition to work for positive changes in the school's fundraising methods.

Materials and Resources
Chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and marker
School administrators or other decision-makers who coordinate the school's fundraising activities

Procedure
1. If your school uses candy sales to help raise funds, ask the children if they think this is a good idea from a nutritional standpoint.

2. What's wrong with candy? Explain that even the junkiest "junk food" won't hurt you if it's eaten only now and then. But candy is one of those foods that can cause triple trouble. First, it has lots of calories from sugar, but little in the way of other, more important nutrients, so it crowds out more nutritious foods from your diet. Second, these calories can put extra weight on your frame. And third, the sugar, and especially the stickiness, of candy takes a toll on your teeth with cavities.

3. Ask the children if their new-found awareness of good nutrition might make it difficult for them to sell candy to their neighbors. Would they feel better if they could share that knowledge by selling more healthful treats?

4. Whether this is feasible or not, and whether or not the children are concerned about candy sales, it is still worthwhile at this point to discuss some nutritious alternatives to candy. Ask the children for their ideas on which foods might sell as successfully as candy. Make a list.

5. Have the children vote for the food they think would do best. Narrow down the list to the top three. Questions for discussion: Where would these foods come from? Would someone make them? Who? Would the school purchase them? How much would they cost?

6. Invite the people who coordinate the school's fundraising efforts to come to class to answer these questions: How much does it cost the school to purchase the candy? How much does it charge for the candy? How much profit per box or bar does the school make?

7. Have the children propose their list of three foods to these coordinators. If they are at all amenable to considering alternatives, encourage the coordinators to include the children in the factfinding and decision-making process.

8. If the coordinators are not amenable to change, encourage the children to think of

some other ways to raise money with more healthful foods. How about a bake sale, corn roast, or watermelon party?

ACTIVITY FIFTY-SIX
JOIN THE HEALTHFUL FOOD HALL OF FAME

Related Subjects
Language arts

Description
After answering a fail-proof questionnaire about healthful changes they've made–or would like to make–in their diets, the children receive certificates that cite them as members of the "Healthful Food Hall of Fame."

Purpose
To receive positive reinforcement for taking steps to eat a more healthful diet.

Materials and Resources
"Entrance Exam to the Healthful Food Hall of Fame" handout
"Healthful Food Hall of Fame Certificate" handout
Pencils, crayons, and other drawing materials

Procedures
1. Tell the children that many children and adults are trying to lead healthier lives by eating more nutritious diets and keeping fit. But it's not always easy. You have to want to make certain changes in your life, and you have to be willing to stick with them. Explain that even the smallest of changes is a big accomplishment–not only because change can be difficult, but because every little change helps.

2. If the children have done Activity 25, "The Junk Food Hall of Shame," ask them to recall the food choices and eating habits of the "honorees" in that exercise. If the children have not completed that activity, ask them to think about some food choices and habits that could lead to health problems. Here are some ideas to stimulate discussion:
–Diets high in sugar (lots of candy, sweet desserts, soft drinks, and sugary breakfast cereals)
–Diets high in fat (lots of fatty meats, fried foods, and hard cheeses)
–Diets high in sodium (lots of processed foods, lots of salt used at the table)
–Diets low in starch and fiber (few fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, breads and cereals made with whole grains, or legumes)

3. Ask the children to think carefully about their own diets and habits compared with those of a Junk Food Hall of Shamer's. Did they used to eat just like that? If so, have they made any improvements? If they have never eaten like that, could any of their food choices or habits be improved?

4. Distribute copies of the handout, "Entrance Exam to the Healthful Food Hall of Fame." Tell the children that this is not a real exam, but a fun way for them to assess their own progress in trying to eat a more healthful diet. (The "exam" is constructed so that every child who answers "yes" to at least one question can enter the "Healthful Food Hall of Fame.")

5. After "scoring" the exam, present every eligible child with a "Healthful Food Hall of Fame Certificate." The children should write their names on their certificates. They may also want to draw a picture of themselves or attach a photograph.

Older Kids Can Also:
–Write an essay about the health benefits of cutting down on sugary, fatty, and salty foods, and of increasing consumption of starchy and fiber-rich foods.

CHEWS YOUR OWN FOODS

ACT 1–Bread Head is watching television. Mr. Citrus keeps trying to get his attention, but Bread Head is too busy to hear him.

MR. CITRUS: Hey, you've been loafing around long enough. Let's go for a walk.

BREAD HEAD: But I'm watching TV. I can't believe all the great shows–"I Love Juicy," "Sesame Seed," "The Muffins"!

MR. CITRUS: Can't you think of anything but food? Let's go for a walk!

BREAD HEAD: Okay, let's roll!

ACT 2–Mr. Citrus and Bread Head take a walk through a park. The two see a mother trying to feed her child lots of candy. The child is refusing and crying.

CHILD: No, no, no! I don't want these sticky sweets! I don't like them!

MOTHER: But sweetheart, my little sugar drop, everyone loves candy.

CHILD: I am not a sugar drop, and I don't like sweets!

(Mr. Citrus and Bread Head look at each other and shake their heads.)

MR. CITRUS: I don't like the way the little girl said it, but I do agree with what she said. Just because everyone else likes something, doesn't mean you have to.

BREAD HEAD: Yeah, and besides, I know a lot of kids who would rather munch on one of your relatives than on some gloppy, sweet goo.

ACT 3–Mr. Citrus and Bread Head walk on. Next they see a father and a young child. The father is opening a picnic basket.

FATHER: What would you like to eat for lunch?

CHILD: I don't know. What do we have?

FATHER: Well, I asked you for some help before we left home, and you didn't have any ideas then, either. So, I packed my own very favorite picnic foods: pizza with sardines, prune milkshakes, and chocolate ants.

CHILD: Aaaaagh!

(Mr. Citrus and Bread Head look at each other and shake their heads.)

MR. CITRUS: Poor kid. He had a chance to choose his own foods before they left for the picnic, but he blew it.

BREAD HEAD: Poor kid!

ACT 4–Mr. Citrus and Bread Head walk on. This time, they see two children sitting on a park bench. The children are eating sandwiches and fresh fruits and vegetables, and they are drinking low-fat milk. They look very happy.

CHILD 1: This is the best lunch I ever ate! I'm so glad we packed it ourselves!

CHILD 2: Me too! My older sister helped us, but *we* made the decisions.

(Mr. Citrus and Bread Head walk over to the two children.)

MR. CITRUS AND BREAD HEAD: Orange you glad you can make your own food choices?

(The children nod happily in agreement.)

THE END

ENTRANCE EXAM TO THE HEALTHFUL FOOD HALL OF FAME

Answer "yes" or "no" to the following questions:

1. Do you eat more fruits and vegetables than you used to? _____

2. Would you like to eat more fruits and vegetables than you do now? _____

3. Do you eat more whole-grain breads or cereals than you used to? _____

4. Would you like to eat more whole-grain breads and cereals than you do now? _____

5. Have you tasted any legumes (dried peas and beans) lately? _____

6. Would you like to eat more legumes than you do now? _____

7. Have you cut down on candy and other sugary sweets? _____

8. Would you like to eat fewer of these treats? _____

9. Have you cut down on fatty foods? _____

10. Would you like to eat fewer fatty foods? _____

11. Have you cut down on salty foods? _____

12. Would you like to eat less salt? _____

Healthful Food Hall of Fame

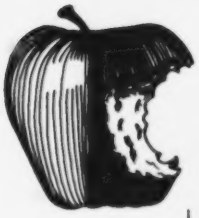
This is to certify that

_____

has learned all about how foods can help or hurt health,
and will strive to eat the best possible diet in the future.

_____

Teacher's Signature



NIBBLES

What's New With Food?

There's always something to say about food–just open any newspaper or magazine, or turn on the TV or radio. Help the children put together their own newsletter that capitalizes on all this information. They can cut and paste stories, cartoons, or photographs, or write and illustrate their own works. This spare-time classroom activity can be as short or as long as you like.

Tell the School: Don't Be a Nutrition Fool

Have a nutrition message? Say it on the airwaves–the school intercom airwaves, that is. The children can write and present their own "public service announcements" (messages that "sell" ideas rather than products) to spread some good food words throughout the school.

Post It On a Poster

Choose a theme and encourage the kids to let their imaginations run wild with healthful-food posters. For example, "Fresh is Best" or "S.O.S.–Stop Overdoing Salt." Hang the posters in the halls and cafeteria where everyone can see. Try to place them in local businesses and shopping malls, too.

Teach Those Children Well

Kids have a lot to teach other kids. Let your students plan some mini-lessons on good eating for younger children in the school. You might want to invite a primary-grade teacher or two to give your class some pointers on working with younger children.

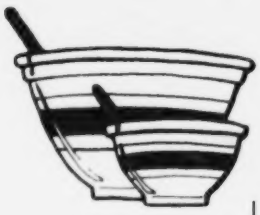
Food for All

Tell the children to be on the lookout for news stories that address local, national, or world hunger. Questions for discussion: Where do these people live? Why aren't they getting enough to eat? What might it feel like to be hungry? How can we help?

TAKE-HOME TIPS

_____ [student's name] is learning a lot about good nutrition and wants to share it with you and others. Here are some ways you can help him/her do that. You may have a thing or two to share, too!

- Go to the library together to look for good books about good foods.
- Newspapers and magazines are full of nutrition articles. Search these out and read them together.
- If you have younger children, too, make a nutrition picture-book for them. Just cut and paste magazine photos of foods into a scrapbook.
- Learn to make a new nutritious dish together and prepare it for the rest of the family. Tell them what it's made of and what's so healthful about it.
- Plan a "no junk food" week. Your home should be free and clear of all fatty, sugary, and salty snacks. Your refrigerator and cupboards should be full of good-for-you treats, like fresh fruits and vegetables. Try to motivate each other and the rest of the family to stick with it—at home and away from home. Who knows, at the end of the week maybe you'll want to junk "junk food" forever!
- Make some nutrition goals together, like "drink milk every day" or "eat fresh fruit instead of candy." Put the goals on a chart and give each other gold stars for every day that you do what you planned.
- Everyone's interested in nutrition! Share what you learn with friends, neighbors, and relatives. Trade recipes, suggest good books, and serve meals that put your nutrition know-how where their mouths are!



COOK IT TOGETHER

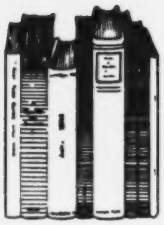
When you're in the know about good nutrition, it's a shame to keep it to yourself! Next time you're asked to supply sweets for a bake sale, party, or other event, make this recipe. It has more fiber, and less sugar, fat, and salt than many other cookies.

OATMEAL RAISIN COOKIES

Makes about 30 cookies

1 cup rolled oats
1 cup whole-wheat pastry flour
¼ cup unbleached white flour
1 cup raisins
1 teaspoon low-sodium baking powder
¾ cup honey
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup evaporated skim milk
2 egg whites
Vegetable oil

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. In a large bowl, mix together the first five ingredients. Set aside. In another bowl, mix the honey, vanilla, and milk. Set aside.
2. Beat the egg whites until stiff peaks form. Mix the liquid ingredients into the dry ones; then gently fold in the egg whites.
3. Line 2 large cookie sheets with parchment paper or rub them thoroughly with oil. Spoon approximately 1 tablespoon of batter per cookie onto the sheets. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes.
4. Remove the cookies from the pans and set them on a wire rack to cool.



RESOURCES

Resources for Teachers and Parents

Community Food Education Handbook, Ellen Weiss, et al. Agricultural Marketing Project (Nashville), 1980. A comprehensive "how-to" guide distributed by the Cooperative Food Education Program, 2606 Westwood Drive, Nashville, Tenn. 37204.

Food First Curriculum, Laurie Rubin. Institute for Food and Development Policy (San Francisco), 1984. A program to help sixth-graders learn about hunger's roots and possible solutions. For more information on this and related materials, write: Institute for Food and Development Policy, 145 Ninth St., San Francisco, Calif. 94103.

For a list of other materials about hunger, write: National Committee for World Food Day, 1001 22nd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20437.

Learn about sprouts and how they can help conquer hunger. Write: Johnny Alfalfa Sprout, P.O. Box 294, Lewisburg, Penn. 17837.

Books for Children

It's Your Environment–Things to Think About, Things to Do, Sherry Koehler. Charles Scribner's Sons (New York), 1976.

Reasons for Seasons, Linda Allison. Little Brown and Company (Boston), 1975.

APPENDIX

NUTRITION IN A NUTSHELL

No, you don't have to be a nutritionist to help your students—or yourself—eat well. But some nutrition know-how may make you more confident in the classroom. Read on for a bite-sized introduction to healthful eating.

What the Experts Say

The first national diet-and-health policy emerged nearly a decade ago from the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. The committee originally was formed in the 1960s to examine hunger and malnutrition, then the most pressing food-related problems in the United States. After addressing these through a network of new federal feeding programs, the committee in the 1970s turned its attention to an entirely different matter: the health consequences of eating too much of the wrong kinds of food.

Congressional hearings elicited some startling evidence. Day after day, the committee learned more about the connections between diet and such disorders and diseases as tooth decay, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure (hypertension).

The result of several years of deliberations was the report, *Dietary Goals for the United States*, first published in 1977 and revised in 1978. These goals suggest the following changes in food selection and preparation to promote good health:

1. Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables and whole grains.
2. Decrease consumption of refined and other processed sugars and foods high in such sugars.
3. Decrease consumption of foods high in total fat, and partially replace saturated fats, whether obtained from animal or vegetable sources, with polyunsaturated fats.
4. Decrease consumption of animal fat, and choose meats, poultry, and fish which will reduce saturated fat intake.
5. Except for young children, substitute low-fat and non-fat milk for whole milk, and low-fat dairy products for high-fat dairy products.
6. Decrease consumption of butterfat, eggs, and other high cholesterol sources.
7. Decrease consumption of salt and foods high in salt content.

Our nation passed another nutrition milestone in 1980, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services issued *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans.* The guidelines, which were slightly revised in 1985, are:

1. Eat a variety of foods.
2. Maintain desirable weight.
3. Avoid too much fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
4. Eat foods with adequate starch and fiber.
5. Avoid too much sugar.
6. Avoid too much sodium.
7. If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

Sound familiar? They really don't differ so much from the *Dietary Goals* that the Senate committee masterminded in the late 1970s. And they're very much the same as the advice put forth in *Healthy People: The Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention*, released in 1979. This report advises that "Americans probably would be healthier, as a whole, if they consumed:

–only sufficient calories to meet body needs and maintain desirable weight (fewer calories if overweight);

–less saturated fat and cholesterol;

–less salt;

–less sugar;

–relatively more complex carbohydrates such as whole grains, cereals, fruits, and vegetables; and

–relatively more fish, poultry, and legumes, and less red meat."

The National Cancer Institute in 1984 pointed up the suspected role of diet in causing cancer. The Institute's booklet, *Diet, Nutrition and Cancer Prevention*, advises that diets high in fat may increase the risk of getting cancers of the colon, breast, prostate, and endometrium, and that diets low in fiber probably increase the risk of cancers of the colon and rectum.

Digesting the Recommendations

Whether you prefer the *Dietary Goals*, the *Dietary Guidelines*, or whatever, certain tried-and-true principles remain the same throughout all these recommendations. *Eat, Think, and Be Healthy!* boils down these principles into four servings that kids–and adults–can easily swallow:

1. Eat fewer fatty foods.

Cutting down on fat can help you avoid obesity, which has been linked to high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, gall bladder disease, diabetes, liver disease, and other serious health problems. Eating less saturated fat helps reduce blood cholesterol levels and lowers the risk of heart disease. Evidence is also mounting that low-fat diets reduce the risk of developing certain kinds of cancer.

2. Eat fewer sugary foods.

Shunning sugary foods can help avoid tooth decay, as well as obesity. At least as important, it can leave room in your diet for more nutrient-rich foods.

3. Eat fewer salty foods.

The most important benefit of shaking the salt habit is reducing the risk of high blood pressure.

4. Eat more starchy and fiber-rich foods.

Eating more starchy and high-fiber foods–like fresh fruits and vegetables (including potatoes), whole-grain breads, pasta, rice, and dried beans and peas–increases your intake of vitamins and minerals and decreases sugar and fats. These foods provide dietary fiber and can help prevent obesity, constipation, and other digestive disorders, and possibly colon cancer. Dietary fiber may also help lower blood cholesterol and control diabetes.

Because these recommendations implicitly endorse a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, there are some other health benefits, as well:

First, vitamins A and C, which are present in many fruits and vegetables, may help prevent cancer. Vitamin A-rich foods are believed to inhibit cancers of the skin, breast, bladder, and lung. There is evidence, though less certain, that vitamin C reduces the risk of cancer of the esophagus, larynx, and stomach.

And second, some scientists believe that all vegetables–whether because of the vitamin A, vitamin C, fiber, or lack of fat–may play a role in helping to prevent cancers of the stomach, colon, esophagus, larynx, lung, and breast. Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower) may also contain additional anti-cancer substances.

Advice is all well and good, and for many people, that's enough. But if you're curious about some of the scientific evidence behind these recommendations, the next section is for you.

Back to the Basics

The science of nutrition covers a lot of ground–far more than you may want or need to know. What follows is a small serving of the information that can help you understand the connections between diet and health.

Human nutrition is the way our bodies take in and use food substances. Those substances, called **nutrients**, are proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water.

Let's look first at proteins, carbohydrates, and fats–the only nutrients that fuel our bodies with calories:

Proteins are the "handymen" of your body. They're responsible for growth, maintenance, and repair, and they help regulate many chemical processes.

You need some protein every day. But if you're like most Americans, you get more than enough. While proteins in and of themselves are not "fattening" (one gram of protein has four calories, as compared to nine calories in a gram of fat), your body turns the proteins it can't use into fat. Another problem with excess protein consumption is that at least half the calories in such "protein" foods as eggs, whole milk, cheese, nuts, seeds, and many cuts of beef, come from fat.

But lower-fat foods have protein, too. Lean meat, fish, poultry, legumes (dried peas and beans), cereals, breads, pasta, other grain products, and, to a lesser extent, vegetables, also pack a lot of protein power.

Proteins are made of various combinations of some or all of about 20 amino acids. Eight of these are called "essential" amino acids, because our bodies can't make them themselves. Only

animal proteins–meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, and eggs–have all the essential amino acids in roughly the right amounts. Therefore, these foods supply "complete" proteins.

But there's another way to make proteins complete: combine vegetable proteins (from fruits, beans, grains, and other vegetables) with each other or with small amounts of animal protein foods. You probably do this all the time without even thinking when you eat foods such as cereal with milk, stir-fried chicken with rice, or macaroni and cheese.

Carbohydrates. Most carbohydrates are vegetable-origin nutrients that supply our bodies with their favorite kind of fuel: glucose. But, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, carbohydrates have their good and bad side. The good side includes starch and fiber (the "complex" carbohydrates) and naturally occurring sugars (one type of "simple" carbohydrates). The bad side is the other simple carbohydrate, refined sugar.

Starch has long been misunderstood. Baked potatoes and whole wheat bread are starchy foods that offer vitamins, minerals, protein, and fiber. Yet, with all the fats we slather on them, we all too often turn starchy foods into fattening foods. Fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes contain varying amounts of starch, and all–except coconuts and avocados–are low in fat. Furthermore, starches (as well as sugars) supply four calories per gram, the same amount as proteins.

Foods of vegetable origin contain another important complex carbohydrate, **dietary fiber**. This is a general term that refers to all parts of plant cells that the human body can't completely digest. Rather than supply fuel, some fibers speed wastes through our intestinal tract. This may help prevent such digestive disorders as constipation. Fiber may also help protect against cancer of the colon, possibly by increasing the volume of waste.

Sugar is sugar. You can't argue with that. But the **naturally occurring sugars** in fruits and dairy products have some friends along, as well: vitamins, minerals, starch, and fiber in fruit; and protein, vitamins, minerals, and varying amounts of fat in dairy products.

Refined sugars are loners, but they're not wallflowers. They make their presence known in cereals, candies, soft drinks, cakes, and cookies–foods notorious for their sugar content, rather than famous for their other nutrients. As a result, when we eat foods loaded with refined sugars, we're filling up on "empty" calories. This causes us either to neglect more nutrient-packed ones or to eat them anyway, thus increasing our caloric intake and our chances of becoming obese. Obesity, in turn, is an important risk factor in the development of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), heart disease, and diabetes. Finally, sugar contributes to tooth decay.

Fats. Remember this? "Jack Spratt could eat no fat. His wife could eat no lean. And so between the two of them, they licked the platter clean."

If only everyone could eat like Mr. Spratt! But most Americans eat too much fat, and our bodies just can't handle the excess. Fat is implicated in a host of life-threatening diseases and disorders, including heart disease (the most common cause of death in

America), obesity, and cancers of the colon, breast, and prostate.

This is not to say you don't need fats; you do–but only about one tablespoon per day, or one-eighth the amount consumed by the average American. Dietary fats are the only food sources of vitamins A, D, E, and K, which are known as the fat-soluble vitamins. Dietary fats also supply linoleic acid, an "essential fatty acid" that our bodies need and can't make on their own. And, dietary fats are concentrated sources of food energy: each gram of fat has nine calories, over twice the amount in protein or carbohydrates.

When it comes to fat consumption, the type of fat is at least as important as the amount. A major reason to be concerned about this fat factor is the effect it can have on your blood cholesterol level. Cholesterol is the basic building block of hormones and other essential body chemicals. No matter what you eat, your body can itself produce enough cholesterol.

The problem is, sometimes there's too much cholesterol. Studies have shown that high levels of **saturated fat** and **cholesterol** in the diet can increase the cholesterol level in the blood. Other studies have proven that the risk of heart disease increases as the level of blood cholesterol increases. Heart attacks and strokes can result from too much cholesterol in the blood, because it builds up on the walls of arteries feeding the heart and brain, making it more and more difficult for blood to pass through. When an artery to the heart gets completely blocked by cholesterol deposits, the person suffers a heart attack. When an artery to the brain gets blocked, the person suffers a stroke.

Foods that are high in saturated fats include meat, whole milk, cheese, ice cream, butter, animal fat-based shortening, coconut, coconut oil, and palm oil. Animal-origin foods also contain dietary cholesterol, with egg the single largest contributor of cholesterol in the average diet.

Researchers have found that **polyunsaturated fats** modestly lower blood cholesterol levels. Liquid vegetable oils made from sunflowers, safflowers, corn, soybeans, or cottonseeds are high in polyunsaturated fats. Switching from saturated to **monounsaturated fats** also reduces blood cholesterol levels. Olive oil contains mostly monounsaturated fat; peanuts contain quite a bit, too, though peanut oil may promote heart disease in other ways.

While the remaining nutrients don't provide food energy (calories), they supply other things we can't do without.

Vitamins. Minute amounts of vitamins do big things in the human body, which can't adequately make vitamins itself. They help the body through its chemical paces; help it utilize proteins, carbohydrates, and fats; help it make blood cells, hormones, and genetic materials; and help keep the nervous system on track.

Four of the 13 vitamins–A, D, E, and K–are fat-soluble. This means they are found primarily in the fat or oil components of animal-origin foods and oily vegetable foods. We can also get a precursor of vitamin A–carotene–from deep-yellow fruits and vegetables and dark green vegetables. Our bodies can convert carotene into vitamin A. Other sources of vitamins E and K include leafy green vegetables.

Because fat-soluble vitamins are stored in the body's fat, you

don't need to consume them every day. By the same token, if you eat massive amounts over long periods of time, you could develop symptoms of toxicity.

The water-soluble vitamins—the B complex and vitamin C—can't be stockpiled in the body for very long. As a result, you need to ingest these vitamins every day, and it's fairly difficult to consume too much. The B vitamins are found in such foods as whole grain and enriched breads and cereals, wheat germ, legumes, meats, poultry, organ meats, dairy products, eggs, and leafy, dark-green vegetables. Vitamin C is found in many fruits and vegetables, with the highest concentrations in citrus fruits.

What about over-the-counter vitamins? Your body can't tell the difference between natural vitamins and the factory-made ones in vitamin pills. But for most people, a balanced diet that emphasizes fresh, rather than processed, foods, should provide most of the necessary vitamins. However, for people who are on a weight-loss diet or who, for some other reason, do not get all the vitamins they need, multi-vitamin pills may serve as a sensible insurance policy.

Minerals. Minerals are just as important as vitamins. They're vital to the structure of every tooth, bone, muscle, nerve—in fact, every cell—in your body. In addition, they help turn your food into energy, keep your blood cells healthy, and maintain the necessary fluid balance.

You need certain minerals in relatively large quantities. These include calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus. Other minerals, called trace elements, are needed in much smaller amounts, though they're still very important. The trace minerals include copper, fluoride, iodine, iron, manganese, selenium, chromium, and molybdenum. The body also needs chloride, potassium, and sodium.

Like vitamins and essential amino acids, minerals cannot be manufactured in our bodies, which means we need certain minimum amounts to stay healthy. And, like the fat-soluble vitamins which are stored in our bodies, minerals consumed in too-large doses can cause serious health problems. Most nutritionists agree that the best way for most people to get enough minerals is to eat a balanced diet, though taking a multi-vitamin and -mineral supplement makes sense for some people.

Three minerals are of particular health concern to Americans:

One, **sodium**, when eaten in excess, often increases the risk or severity of high blood pressure, one of the most serious and widespread health problems in America.

Most Americans consume far more sodium than they need. Most of it comes from sodium chloride—table salt. But the salt shaker isn't really the problem. The biggest source of sodium is processed foods, even many that don't taste salty. While fresh foods do contain some sodium, the amounts are negligible.

Calcium helps your bones grow and keeps them strong. In later years, the danger of getting too little calcium is osteoporosis, or "brittle bone disease." Children, whose bones are growing at a rapid rate, need lots of calcium not only to spur this process along, but to prepare their bodies for later years when bone loss invariably occurs. Good sources of calcium include dairy products,

canned salmon or sardines with bones, collard greens, turnip greens, mustard greens, broccoli, and kale.

Oxygen isn't just for your lungs; blood and muscle cells need it, and **iron** gets it there. The best sources of iron are meat, poultry, and fish, which have the kind of iron our bodies absorb most readily. But you can increase the absorption of such iron-containing vegetable foods as grains, seeds, green leafy vegetables, and dried beans–just eat them with a little meat, poultry, or fish. Vitamin C also increases iron absorption.

Water. This transparent, calorie-free substance may not look like a nutrient, but as far as our bodies are concerned, it's the most important one there is. Water is needed to carry out every single function our bodies perform. Drinking beverages is one way to consume water, but many foods–especially fruits and vegetables–also contain this nutrient.

A Word About Some Other Dietary Recommendations

The **Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs)**, which were established by the National Academy of Sciences, are general recommendations on the amounts of nutrients that most healthy people need. The RDAs cover calories, protein, 10 vitamins, and six minerals, and are revised as research yields new findings.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration adapted the RDAs for use in food labeling. These recommendations, called the **U.S. Recommended Daily Allowances (U.S. RDAs)**, help consumers determine the nutritional adequacy of processed foods that have nutrition labeling. The U.S. RDAs set nutrient levels for only one type of person: an average adult. This standard is intended to ensure that virtually any healthy person who relies on the U.S. RDAs will get at least the amount of nutrients he or she needs.

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6. *The Fast-Food Guide:* Perhaps the best way to study nutrition is by evaluating the quality of foods that have taken the world by storm. After chapters on nutrition and fast-food labeling, the authors rate the nutritional values of hundreds of well-known fast foods, from Arby's to Wendy's and everything in between. By Michael F. Jacobson and Sarah Fritschner. 225 pages. $4.95 (paperback; Workman Publishing Co.)

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